

2009

Mobile Exhibition System

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MES

**MOBILE
EXHIBITION
SYSTEM**

*Submitted to the faculty of the
School of the Arts at Virginia
Commonwealth University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree, Master of Fine Arts in
Design: Visual Communications.*

MOBILE EXHIBITION SYSTEM

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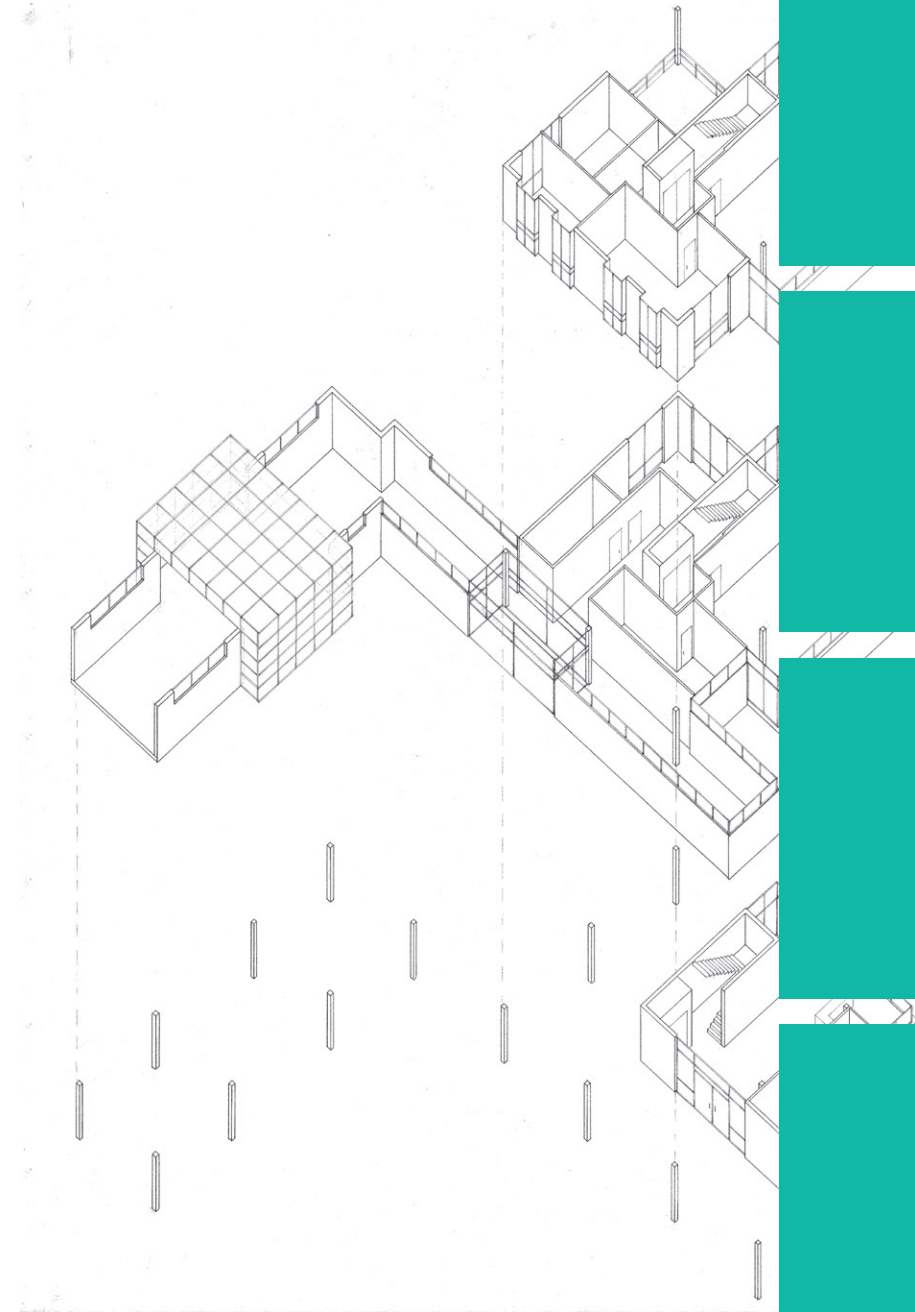
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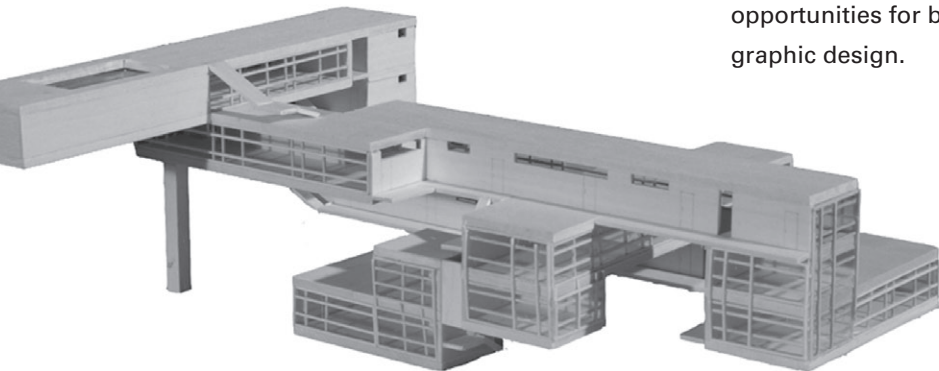
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Through the development and design of a Mobile Exhibition System (MES) in this thesis, I will demonstrate the benefits and possibilities of a flexible and mobile system within an exhibition environment. A flexible system will be able to adapt to a wide range of content, while at the same time, maintaining a synergy between its form and function. By the reuse and reappropriation of shipping containers as the exhibition envelope, the goal of mobility can be achieved, reaching out to those who might not otherwise experience learning through an exhibition environment.w

I am often asked why I did not follow the career path of a degree holding architect. I am quick to reply... “that I began to be disillusioned in the latter years in school when the focus was placed on the structural and mechanical systems of a building. My passion lay in the ideation and design of a space and how it impacted the visitor.” (I was not turning my back on the field of architecture) I recognized the power of architecture to positively affect the quality of life for people at work, home and play. I realized how the smallest design choices could significantly alter human experience and perception within a space. Aspects of a design could govern where people circulated, what they saw, how they felt.



This possibility of creating “experience” and “focusing perception” held real interest for me. I began to take graphic design courses as electives and soon discovered that the physicality of architecture was not the only medium that could impact and influence people in this manner. I had earned a degree in a very well-defined and respected profession, but I chose to turn my attention towards the rapidly changing field of ‘graphic design.’ I have come to think of it, not as a switch in career paths or even interests, but of an extension, an augmentation to my way of thinking about the field of design as a whole.

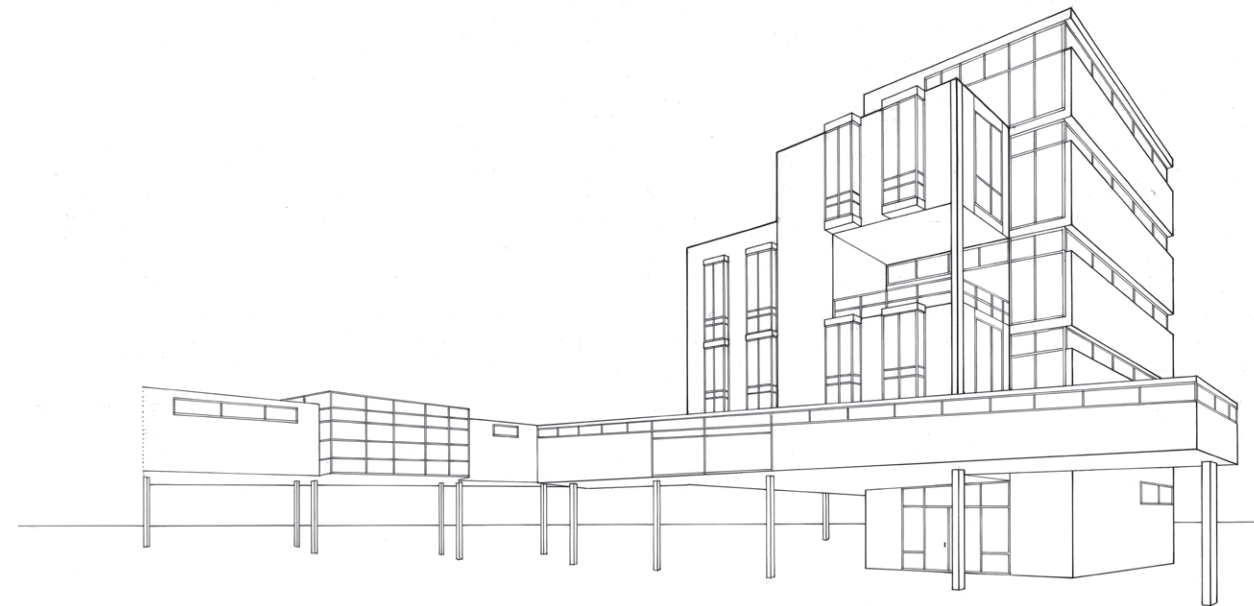
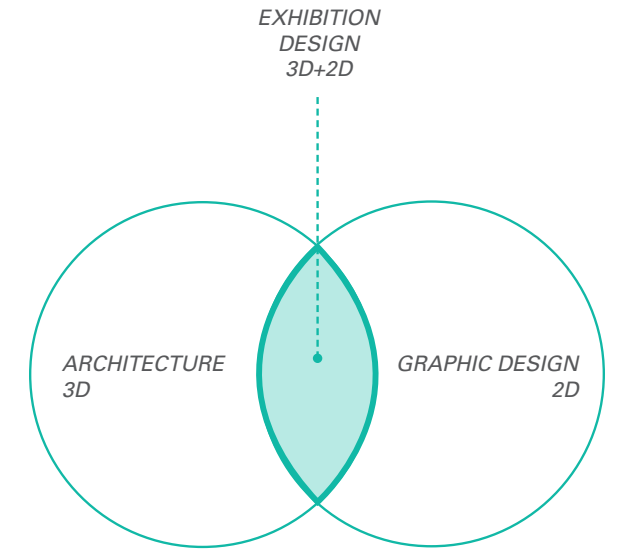


Graphic design’s ability to disseminate information, and educate people captivated me, and had me yearning to further investigate its potential. This led me to the pursuit of a master’s degree in graphic design, and to Virginia Commonwealth University where I began the process of connecting my past experiences in architecture to the new challenges of graphic design.

I view the goals of architecture and graphic design as closely related. They both intend to communicate and provoke feelings and emotions. The differences lie in their packaging and delivery. Instead of focusing on how these two professions are unique, I am interested in the fusion of the two. Given my background I see unique and reciprocal opportunities for both architecture and graphic design.

The connections between architecture and graphic design led me to an exploration of exhibition design: a story, a body of information, a message interpreted and experienced within a three-dimensional space. My next question became:

How could this method of communicating to people be expanded and developed to reach more people and broaden the scope of its communication?



Exhibitions, as an alternative means of education, offer an experience different from traditional means of learning. The dynamic environments found in an exhibition allow the visitor to have cognitive and sensory engagement with the subject matter presented. The visitor is able to interface with a message or body of information presented in a single physical space and experience. Exhibitions allow for a shared learning experience that can evoke dialogue and collaboration. Exhibition design focuses on merging environment and communication or place and story/message into a single experience for the visitor.

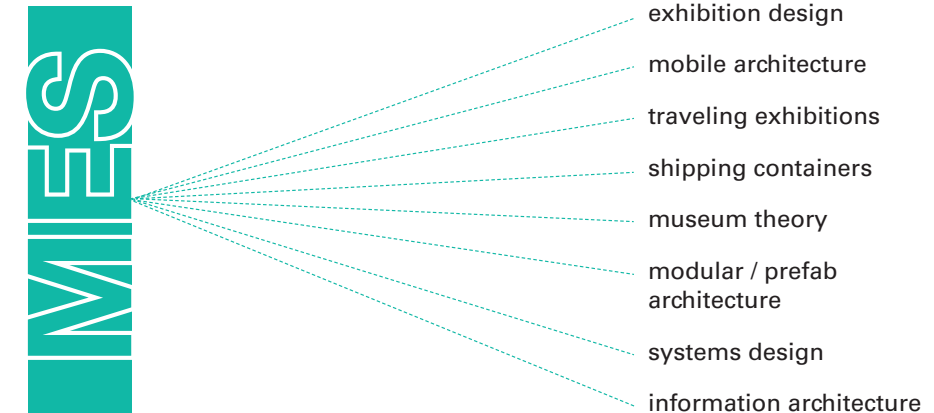


A goal of this project is to increase the current level of accessibility and adaptability of exhibitions. How can more people learn through an exhibition experience; and how can these experiences be adaptable to fit to a wide variety of subject matters?

The advantages of using three-dimensional space as a means of transmitting information, whether in museums, trade fairs, or product venues, transforms the manner in which the visitor can interact with and relate to information. From the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London to the Newseum of modern day, exhibition design is a valuable method of communicating messages that provides unique educational experiences unlike conventional means of learning. As opposed to the space of a book, the physical space of an exhibition offers a different kind of connection to the subject matter presented. The ability to physically move through the information and to reach out and touch walls and artifacts allows for a holistic immersion into the material. The physical distribution and arrangement of content based on

a concept appeals to kinetic learners. The visitor's mind and body is synced, and become an integral element of the exhibit itself. He navigates the exhibition terrain in 'exploratory mode' actively involved in reading signs and making choices that determine how he will observe and interpret the exhibit content. He is involved in a 'mapping' process that results from his simultaneous engagement with both space and information.

The designer of an exhibition has a broad and dynamic visual vocabulary with which to build the visitor's possibilities for experience. Scale, light, shadow, orientation, vista, circulation are some variables that are possible only in three-dimensional space.



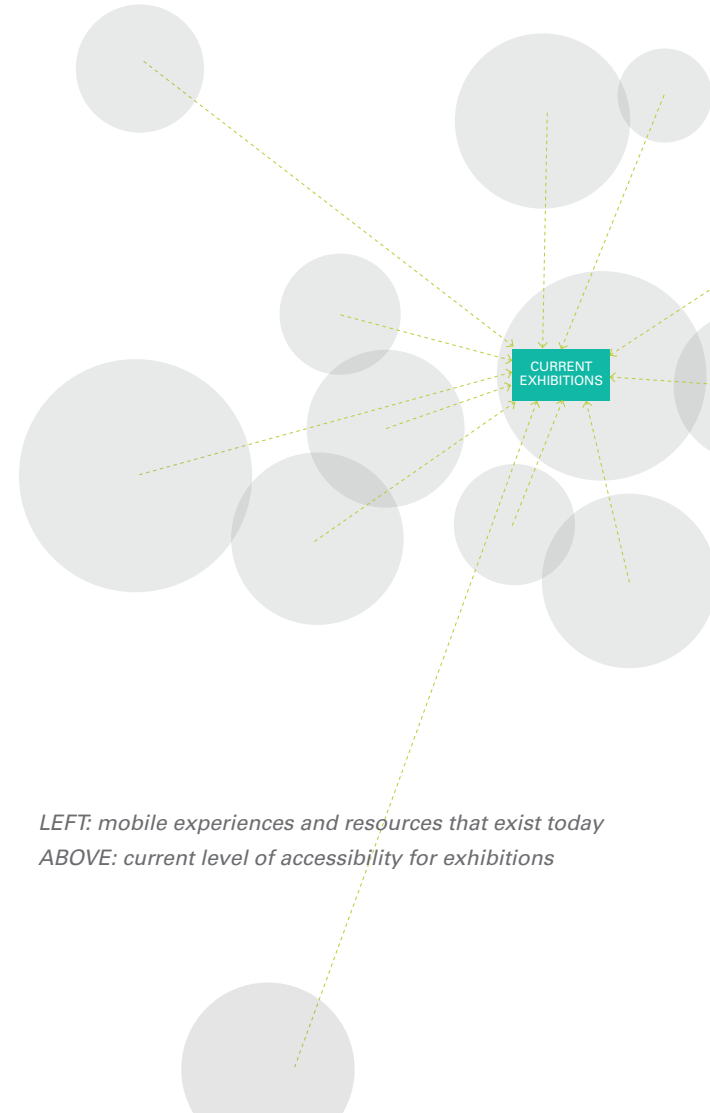
TOP: diagram explaining the parts that comprise the Mobile Exhibition System

ABOVE: diagram showing the various research paths of exploration that contributes to the manifestation of the Mobile Exhibition System



ACCESSIBILITY -- MOBILITY

A shortcoming of exhibition design is its inability to spread and distribute a message and information with relative ease. Exhibitions cannot reach the level of accessibility that printed and electronic media can provide. Due to their three-dimensional nature, scale, and degree of permanence, exhibition installations typically remain in a fixed space and visitors are required to travel them. Some exhibitions have moved beyond their points of origin through the advent of the traveling exhibition. The term 'traveling exhibition,' as understood today, is an installation designed to be transportable. It is designed to be easily dismountable and then reassembled in multiple spaces or venues.



LEFT: mobile experiences and resources that exist today

ABOVE: current level of accessibility for exhibitions

The natural progression of traveling portable exhibitions is to become entirely mobile.

Contained in an envelope of space, these mobile exhibitions can travel from place to place with no boundaries and few restrictions.

Mobility allows for greater connectedness and paradoxically a sense of rootedness, supporting the sense of community within a shared experience tailored specifically for them. Today, there are many mobile experiences that reach a broad population with relative ease. The mobilization of libraries, health care systems, and homes are just a few of these experiences. Through the mobile deployment of these facilities their uses are vastly expanded. Medical aid can be sent to developing countries, and the resources of a library can be delivered to an area lacking in those resources.

Mobile exhibitions would enable smaller towns and communities to host experiences that broaden access to culture and information. On the other end of the spectrum, larger cities could become aware of grass roots organizations and programs, that are not often encountered in an urban setting.

This project investigates the possibility for traveling exhibitions to evolve from solely portable components to an entirely mobile entity. The space and the content of the exhibit are packaged as one fully assembled exhibit experience.

By uprooting exhibitions from their present fixed state, more people will have the opportunity to visit them. The exhibits will go to the people. Believing that “mobility outweighs monumentality,”^[6] exhibitions’ power lies in becoming entirely mobile, reaching out and connecting to communities, rather than remaining in the fixed space of the monumental museum.



ABOVE: diagram illustrating increased level of accessibility with Mobile Exhibitions

ADAPTABILITY -- SYSTEM

CHANGING THE EXHIBITION AUDIENCE

Now that the exhibition has been mobilized and removed from a permanent and fixed location, it is not dependent upon the resources of an existing museum or the established audience of a given institution. Rather than seeking a broad, general audience and designing to meet the expectations of several sub-groups, a mobile exhibition can seek a more selective audience.

Given the mobility and scale of the mobile exhibitions, they can be designed to be more direct in choosing which visitor populations to target, allowing for a more poignant and effective communication and connection with the visitor populations.

The idea of narrowcasting will aid in the dissemination of information to a more narrow audience not intended for the general public. These specific groups can be defined by values, interests, socioeconomic, or geographic attributes.

This system and method of exhibiting information should then be designed to adapt to a wide range of possible contents. A broader range of organizations and groups will have the ability to have their information presented within an exhibition system that has the flexibility to successfully adapt to their specified content.

DESIGNING A FLEXIBLE SYSTEM

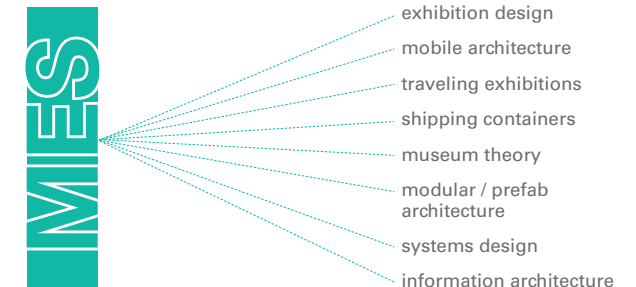
How to begin to design a system appropriate for fitting a wide range content? Should form follow function, as Louis Sullivan's modernist adage suggests, or is it wiser to follow Frank Lloyd Wright's conviction that form and function should act as one - in a spiritual union? Can the informational content and the adaptable system in which it fits truly act as one?

A goal is to design a system that has flexibility but will also share a synergistic relationship with its content. The system will act as a structural framework or backbone to order and support the informational content. The system, or set of interconnected parts that form a whole, will not stop with the organization and ordering of the information, It will extend to the treatment of three dimensional form and the graphic representation of information and then to the way in which the visitor will interact with the information.

In this age of information overload and global connectivity, it is important to carefully analyze how this information is transmitted, communicated and interpreted. Richard Saul Wurman coined the term "information architecture" in 1975 sensing that the world will soon be "inundated with data but starved for the tools and patterns that give them meaning." [3] This project proposes a tool and method that supports Wurman's notion of information architecture.

Through the conscientious visualization of data, messages are communicated and experiences are encountered. Everything is technically considered an experience, or has the possibility to be experienced. The elements that contribute to an experience are knowable and reproducible, therefore making them designable, ordered and systematized.

By focusing more intently on the design of the system for exhibiting rather than the information by itself, a foundation can be established in which to plug many types of information. Instead of remaining transparent and in the background, the system is brought to the forefront to be emphasized and examined. There are many facets to the design and development of an exhibition that can feel detached from one another. By concentrating on an underlying system of structure and experience, a greater unity can be achieved. With special attention paid to this system and how it could be designed to facilitate a variety of contents; a flexible system can be developed.



ABOVE: diagram showing the various research paths of exploration that contributes to the manifestation of the Mobile Exhibition System

EXHIBITION ENVELOPE

America imports 9 million shipping containers a year and only exports 6 million, because it is cheaper for the steam lines to leave the empty containers at American ports than it is to ship them back to their points of origin. These containers, viewed as “the material residue of our trade deficit,” are an abundant resource that should be tapped into. The containers are solid, pre-insulated and waterproof. They have hardwood floors, and are resistant to mold, termites and fire. Reusing and reappropriating this existing resource will result in less environmental impact than fabricating a mobile exhibit from scratch.

The size and mobile nature of shipping containers will allow for relative ease of transport. They measure 20 or 40 feet long, 8 feet wide and 8.5 feet high, and are a blank canvas for the design of an intimately scaled exhibition space. A modular grid system already exists within shipping containers and can be expanded to incorporate the exhibition content and materials. Shipping container architecture, termed *cargotecture*, has viewed these containers as a valuable material resource, and has used them in a number of innovative design projects. They have already been transformed into classrooms, studio spaces, houses, temporary shelters, and outdoor pavilions.



Combining the technology advanced by mobile architecture and shipping container “*cargotecture*” with the idea of a traveling exhibition allows the concept of a self-contained mobile exhibition system to be realized. By reusing shipping containers as the exhibition envelope, the system will respond to the restricted spatial and structural requirements of the container.

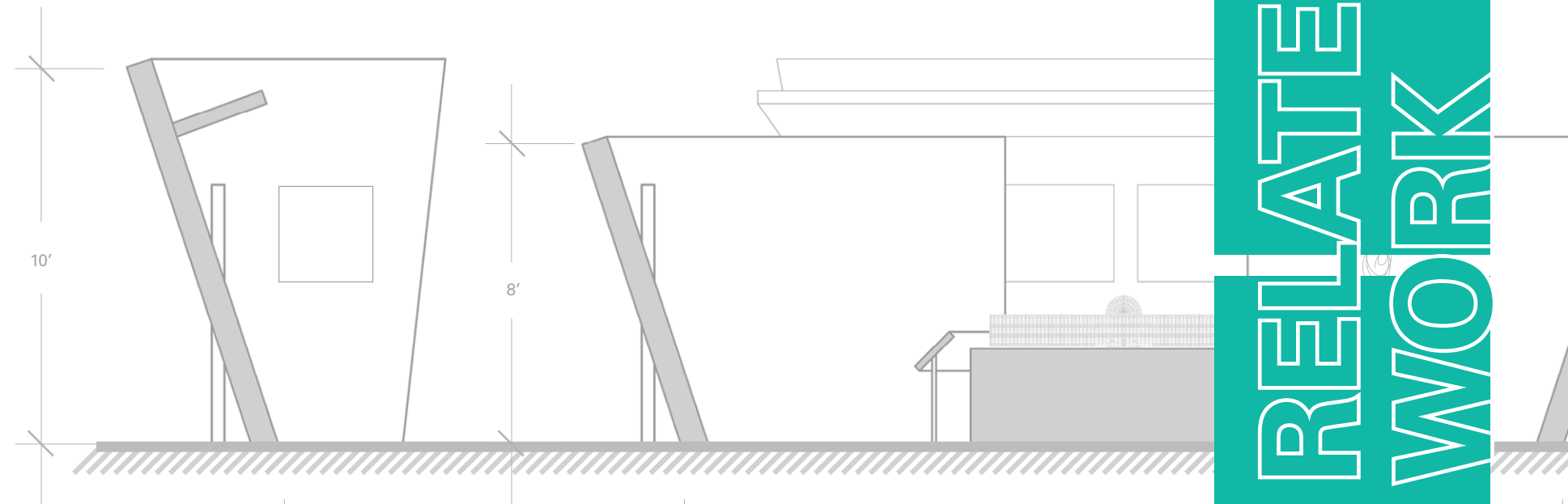
DELIMITATIONS: This project is not an industrial design project. Logistical, structural, and mechanical issues, while acknowledged, will not be thoroughly addressed. Emphasis is placed on the development of the mobile exhibition system and how content will fit into it.





ALL: cargotecture precedents that innovatively transform shipping containers, from temporary medical stations to permanent multi-unit dwellings

Through the course of my graduate studies I tried to create projects that would help me gain an understanding and experience in the union of three-dimensional form/space and two-dimensional information. The research, organization and development of exhibition design projects aided me in this integration. All aspects of these projects were considered; from brainstorming and idea conception, to deciding how the project would formally be organized and represented, and to how graphics would be treated.



RELATED
WORK

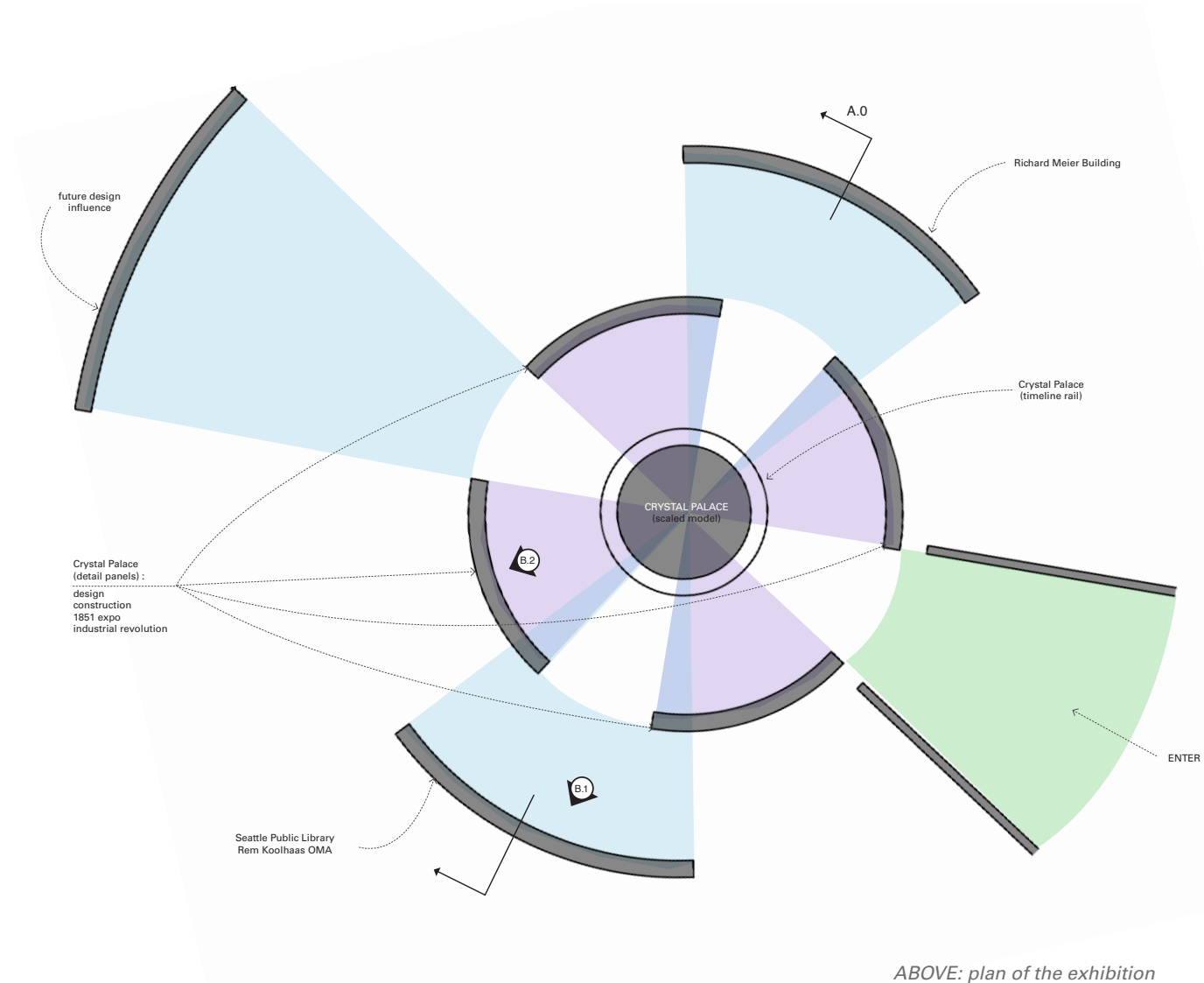
CRYSTAL PALACE: AN ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

'Crystal Palace: An Architectural Legacy' is an exhibition that revolves around the Crystal Palace, built for the first world's fair in London (The Great Exhibition of 1851). In 1851 the impact and effect of the industrial revolution was truly felt and the great exhibition was a means to showcase the technological advancements of the era. The exhibition was intended to celebrate the modern industrial technology and design of all nations.

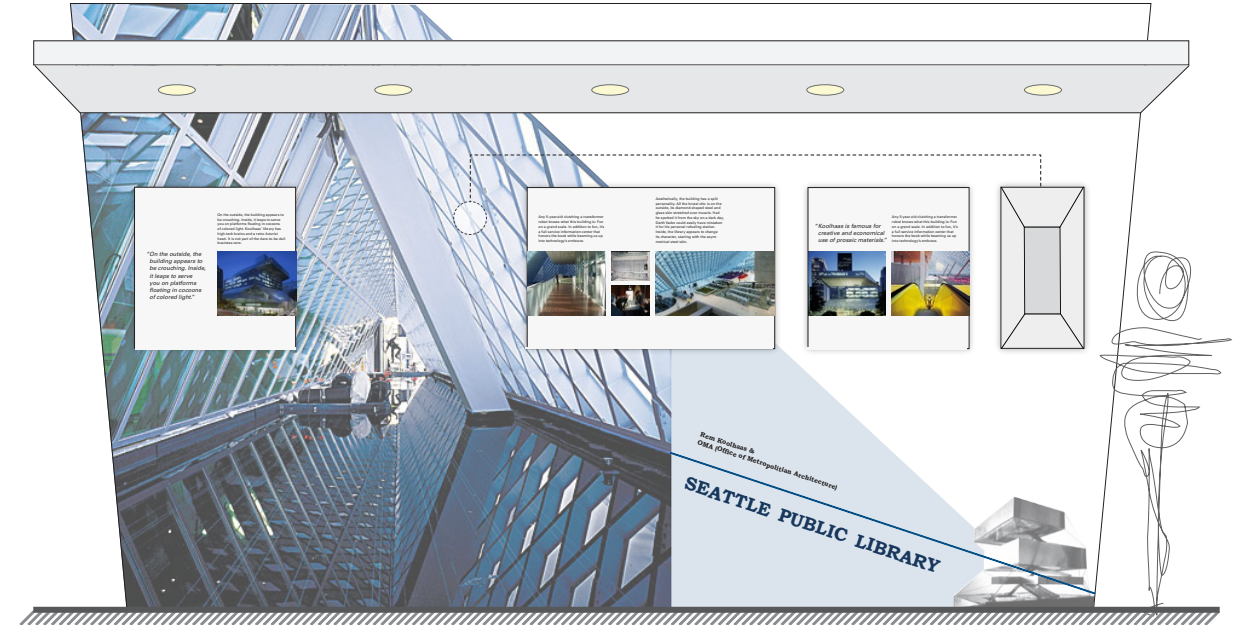
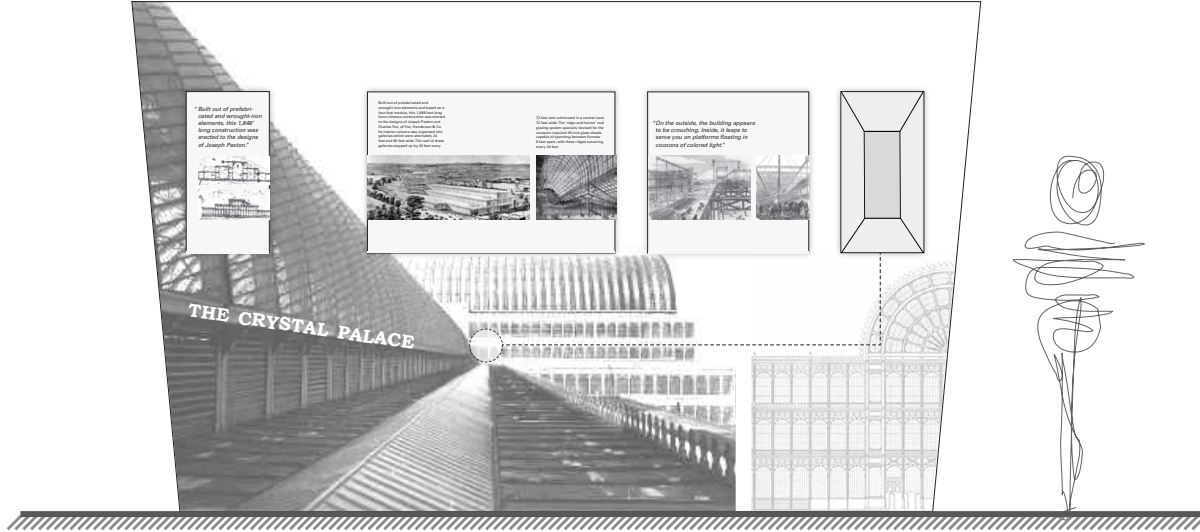
The innovative construction methods, technologies, and materials of the Crystal Palace revolutionized how buildings were designed and constructed from that point on. In continuing the theme of celebrating technological advancement, the proposed exhibit will also showcase more contemporary buildings that have been directly influenced by the Crystal Palace.

A scaled model will be the focal point of this exhibit from which everything radiates. A timeline rail surrounding the model will provide the history of the Crystal Palace from its construction to its relocation and expansion and finally to the fire that destroyed it. The central panels around the model will focus specifically on the Crystal Palace (its idea conception, architect, construction, The Great Exhibition of 1851, and the larger picture of the industrial revolution).

The central part of the exhibition will provide views to the outlying panels on the periphery, drawing the visitor outward to investigate. These panels speak to the lasting legacy and influence of the Crystal Palace by showcasing modern day buildings that identify the Crystal Palace as an architectural precedent. The outermost panels will illustrate a possible project of the future that still has its roots tied to the Crystal Palace. The visitor should be captivated by the specifics of the exhibit while also understanding its overall gestalt. The visitor should sense the movement through time while observing the progress in building and construction technologies.



ABOVE: plan of the exhibition



LEFT: a central panel around the model of the crystal palace highlighting construction methods of the building
ABOVE: a peripheral panel presenting a contemporary building that has borrowed from the architectural methods and techniques of the crystal palace

SEATT

The set in Bookman Old Style, 2.5" in height (250pt).

"Koolhaas is famous for creative and economical use of prosaic materials."

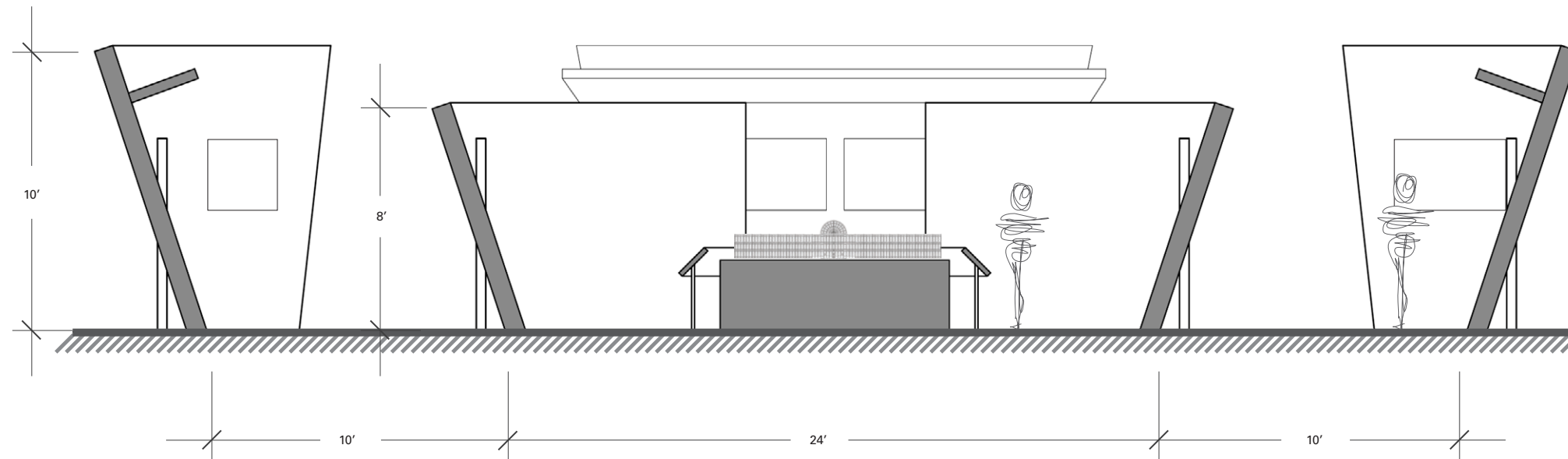
Quoties set in Universa SE Oblique, 75" in height (75pt).

Any 5-year-old clutching a transformer robot knows what this building is: Fun on a grand scale. In addition to fun, it's a full service information center that honors the book while beaming us up into technology's embrace.

Body copy set in Universa SE Roman, 6.5" in height (65pt).

Any 5-year-old clutching a transformer robot knows what this building is: Fun on a grand scale. In addition to fun, it's a full service information center that honors the book while beaming us up into technology's embrace.

Captions set in Universa SE Roman, 6.25" in height (62pt).



LEFT: section through the exhibition illustrating the panel composition and visitor relationship

ABOVE: typographic and color specifications

OUR WALLS / OURSELVES

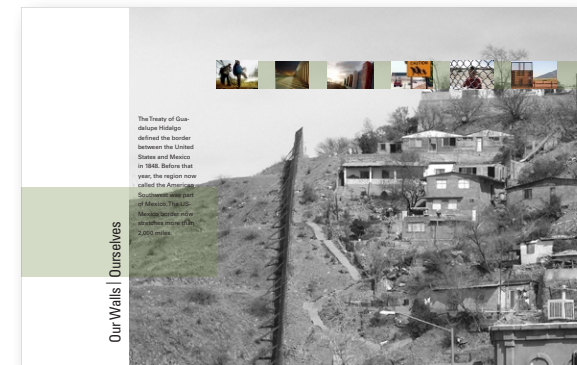
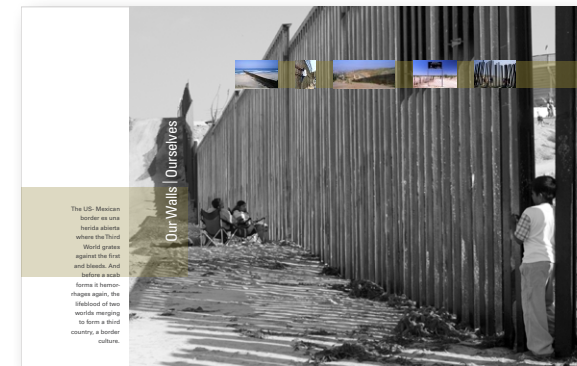
'Our Walls | Ourselves' is an exhibition based on the US-Mexico border wall that divides the two countries, their people, stories, and struggles that occur around this division. The exhibition is intended to be assembled in a public plaza, acting as an obstruction to a heavily traversed space. People are confronted with this installation and forced to make their way around the wall.

Through an extensive collection of images of the wall, I was intrigued by its various forms. Whether an eighteen-foot high solid concrete wall or a series of upright railroad ties that end a few feet into the surf of the Pacific ocean, the wall has become a physical manifestation of a line that divides the two countries.

Through the formal construction of the exhibition, I wanted to convey the surreal nature of the wall. The sculptural wall element of the exhibition is solid and tall at its center. It then gradually deconstructs and dematerializes as the visitor moves toward

the periphery. This deconstruction of the wall emphasizes its transformation from a literal to a figurative structure. The wall becomes permeable.

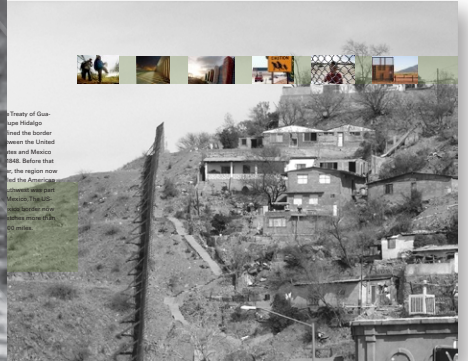
The 'meat' of the project lies in the gaps in the wall. In the exhibition, the text on the ground runs perpendicular to the wall from one side to the other, and can only be fully understood by combining the perspectives from both sides of the wall. The graphic panels are also regulated from these gaps in the wall. The images and text chosen for the panels are designed to have an impact from afar while also offering another level of information at a closer proximity. On the reverse side of the panels is a separate metaphorical set of imagery of feet walking on road lines. The wall is, in essence, just a painted line on a road.



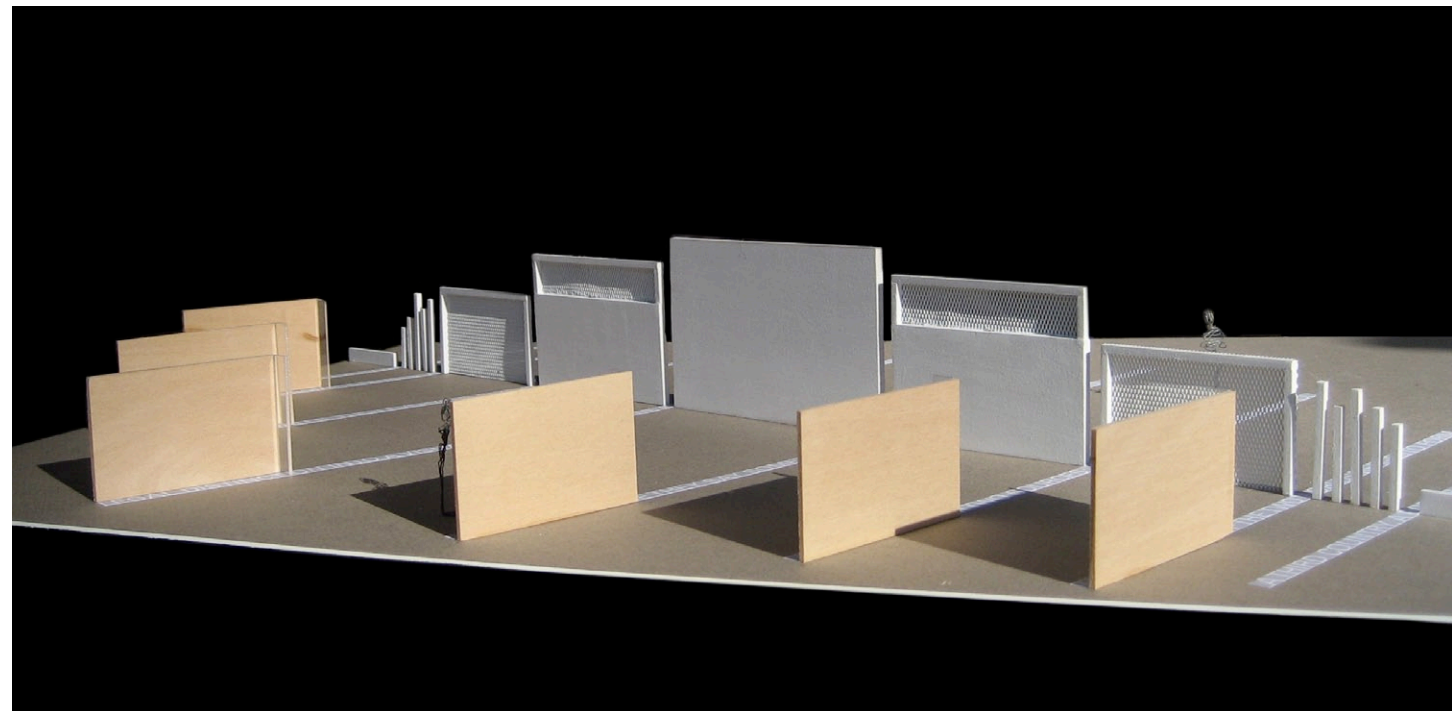
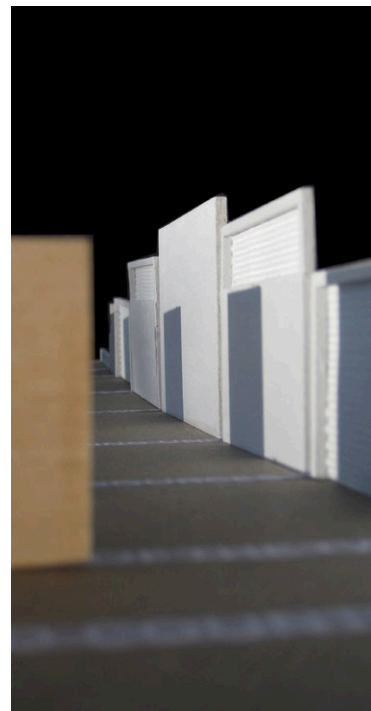
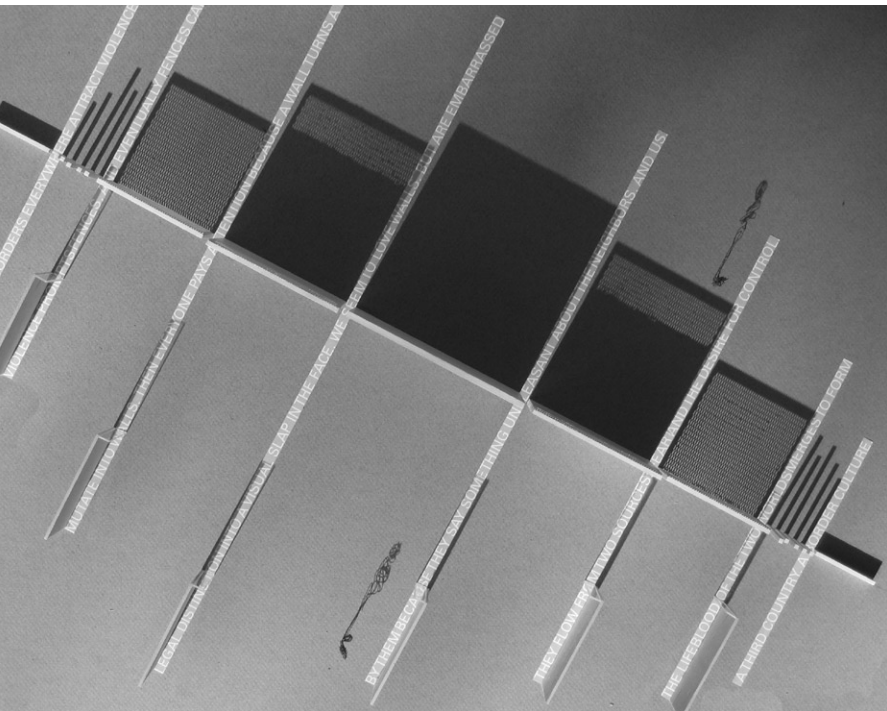


BORDERS EVERYWHERE ATTRACT VIOLENCE, VIOLENCE PROMPTS FENCES, AND EVENTUALLY FENCES CAN MUTATE INTO WALLS.

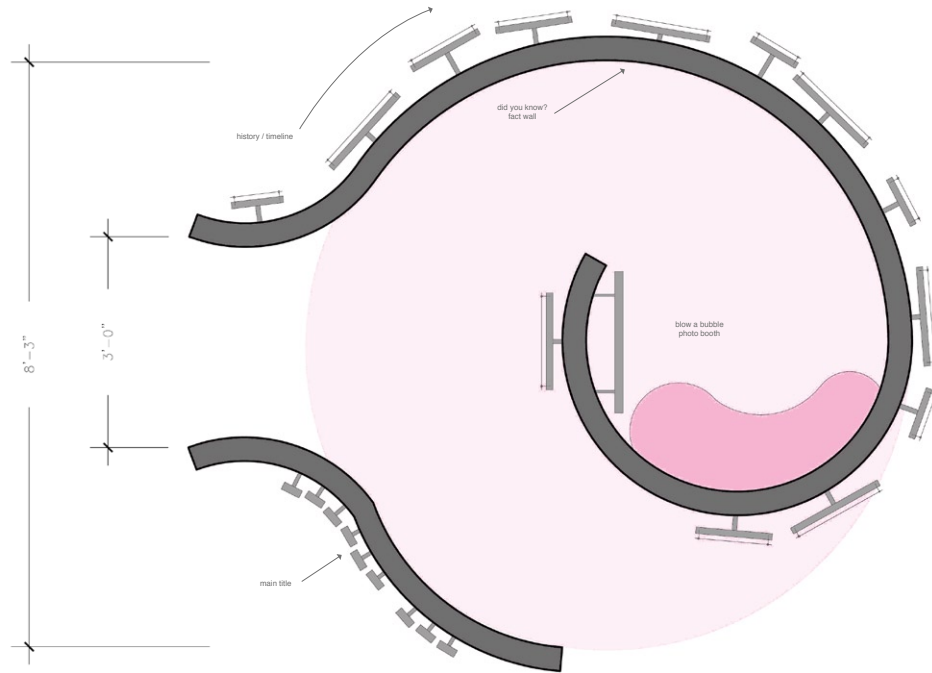
THEN EVERYONE PAYS ATTENTION BECAUSE A WALL TURNS A LEGAL DISTINCTION INTO A VISUAL SLAP IN THE FACE.



Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the border between the United States and Mexico 1848. Before that, the region now called the American Southwest was part of Mexico. The 1848 treaty ended the Mexican-American war of 1846-48.



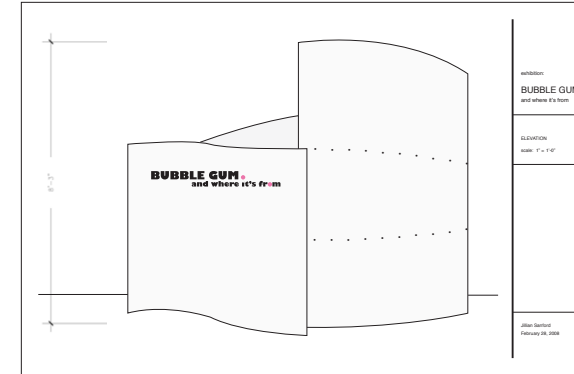
ALL: scaled model of the installation



exhibition:
BUBBLE GUM
and where it's from

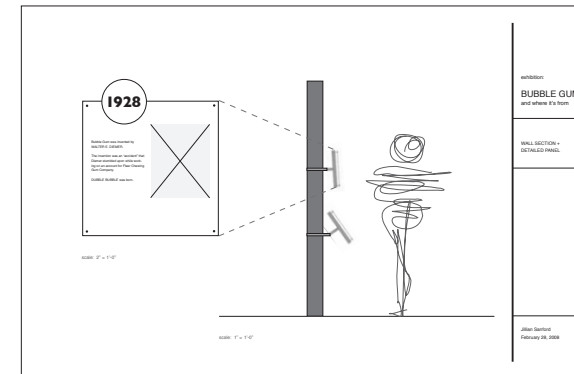
PLAN
scale: 1" = 1'-0"

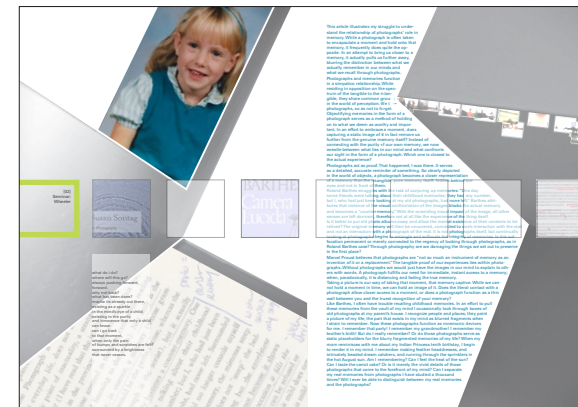
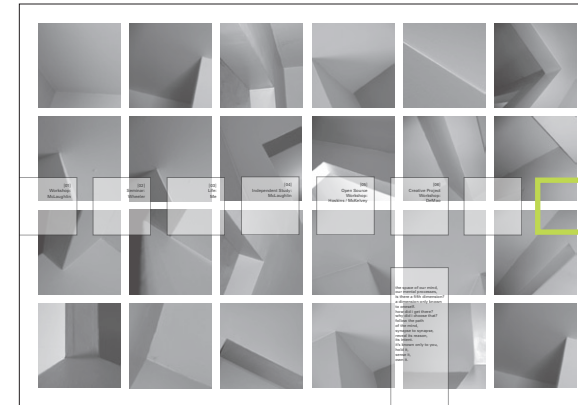
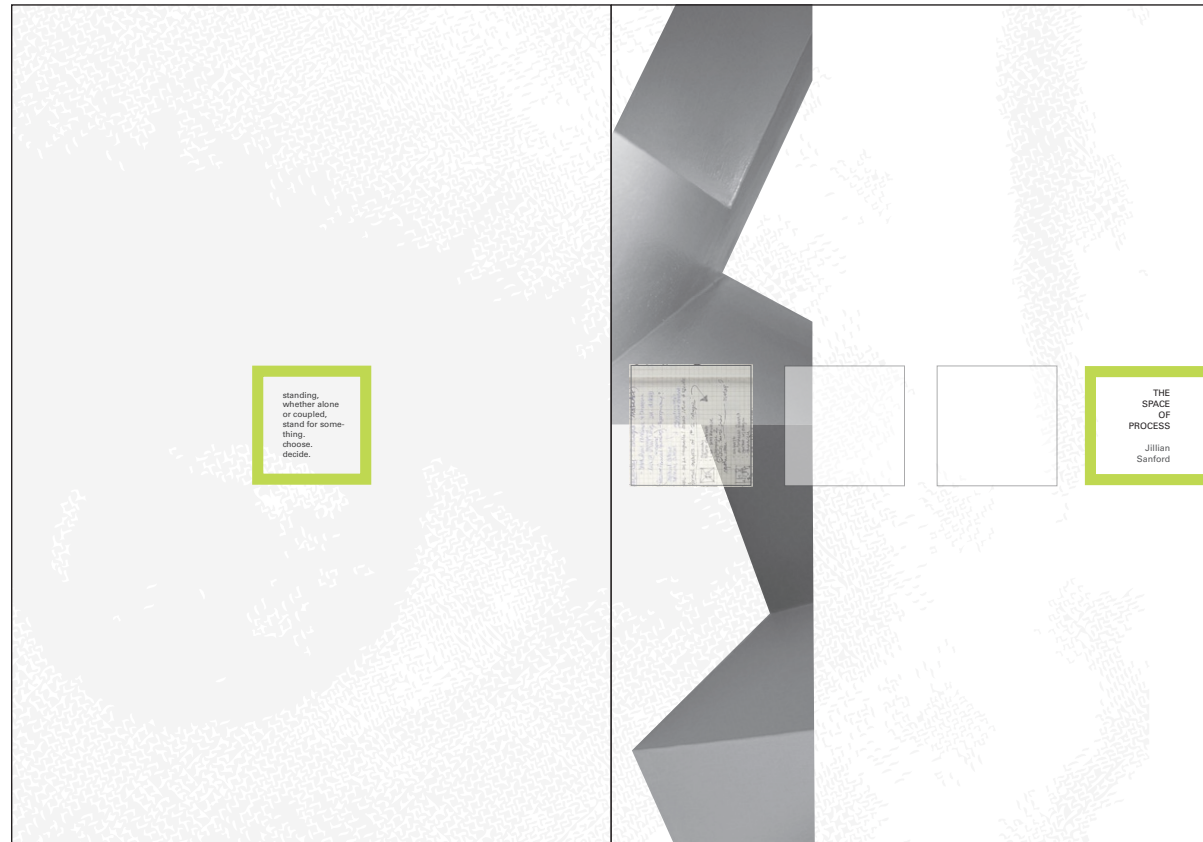
Jillian Sanford
February 28, 2008



BUBBLE GUM AND WHERE IT'S FROM

'Bubble Gum and Where It's From' is a small exhibit experience, consolidated into an intimate form and interpretation. A peg and hole system was utilized to allow for movement of panels and to simplify assembly.

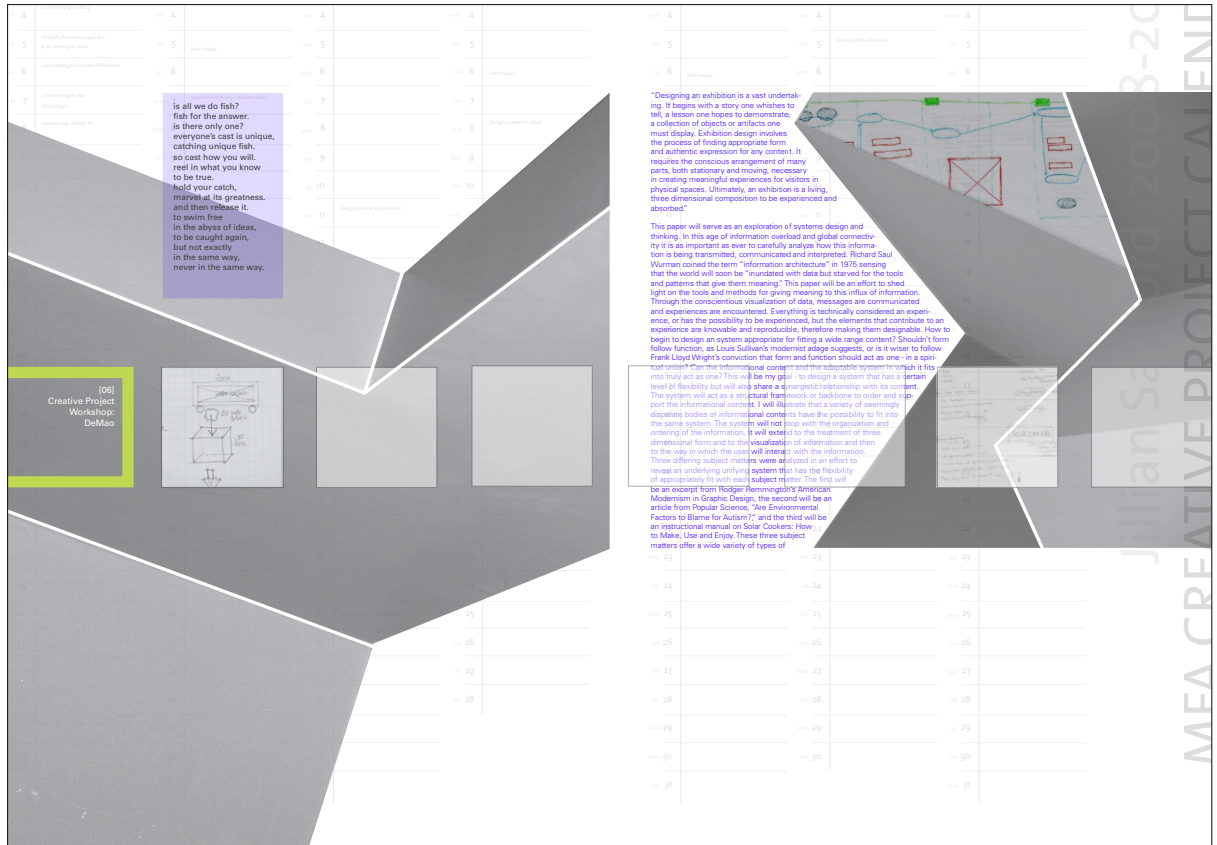
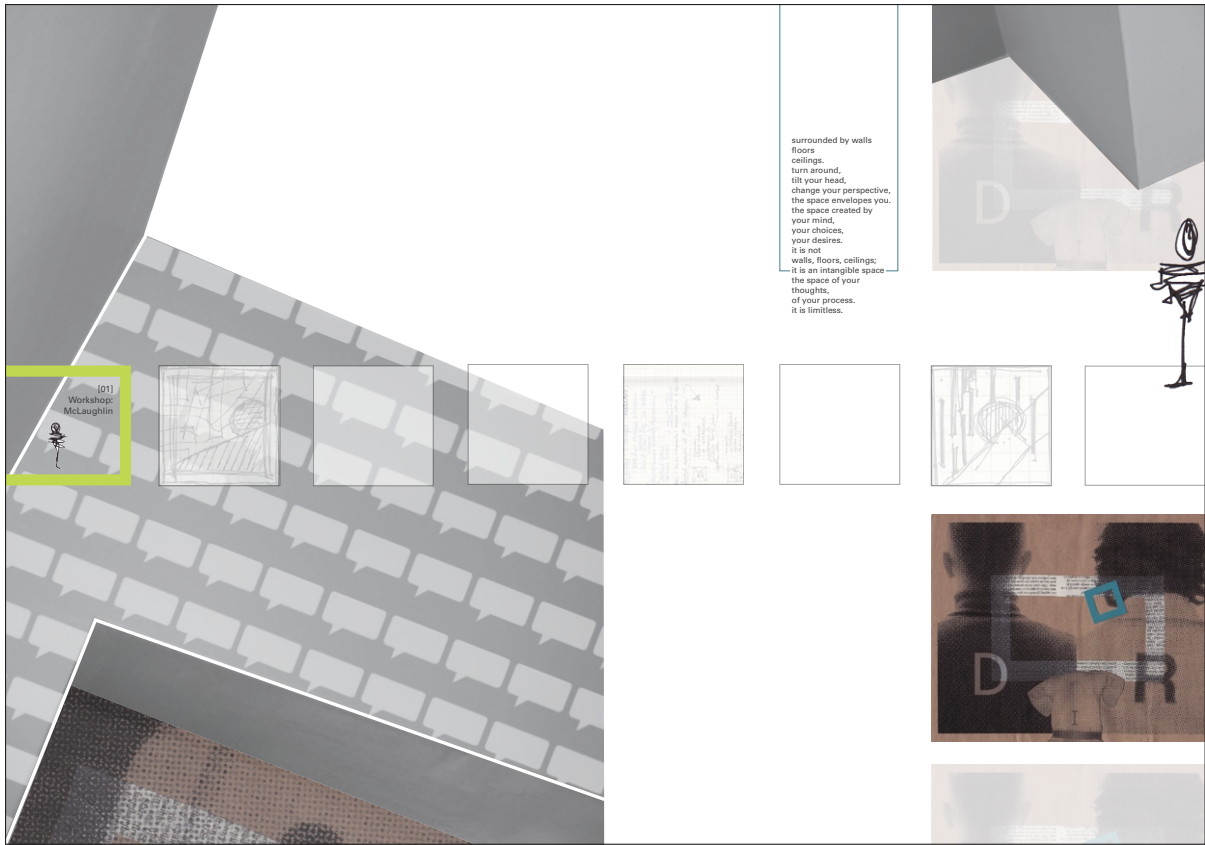




FALL 2008 SIGNATURE

This project was completed in the fall semester of 2008. I designed a sixteen page signature documenting our work and process from the entire semester. I was interested in how an image of a three-dimensional space could function as an organizing device for the distribution information, and how that would affect its interpretation.





This project's main focus is on the exploration and development of a comprehensive process rather than a finalized outcome. From mind maps and sketches to full-scale installations, this creative project includes a wide range of process work at varying scales. It was important that I work in multiple scales at any given time to insure the work's connection to the human scale. While developing the systematized components of the exhibition and how information could be organized, it was also critical that I understand how the visitor would behave and function within the space. Creating models and full-scale mock-ups allowed for a better understanding of the human scale and their connection with the information presented within the space.

what is effective about 2D 3D integration?
 how do you design an experience?
 should the exhibit be impermanent?
 can the exhibit be mobile?
 is an exhibit always a destination?
 how can interaction be heightened?
 should it be an exhibit of immersion?
 what should the content be?
 what is the content?
 should recycled / green materials be used?
 should shipping containers be the envelope?
 should it be a modular system?
 toolkit for makings of an exhibit?
 should it be on the street?
 will it be a sensory experience?
 will it be a cognitive experience?
 a primary goal?
 education w/in exhibits be more accessible?
 can there be a digital translation to exhibit experience?
 how much will the exhibit rely on arch. struct. dir. of sp.
 if content is undetermined, what is space determinant?
 will this be a contribution to the field?
 should the exhibit be geared to general public?
 should it be in a public space?
 can exhibition be modular to fit diff. contents?
 will it be a proposal for a 'real' project?
 should it remain on a conceptual level?
 what sub problems can be developed?

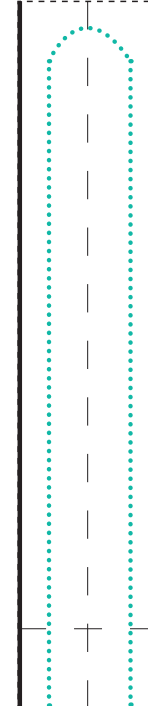
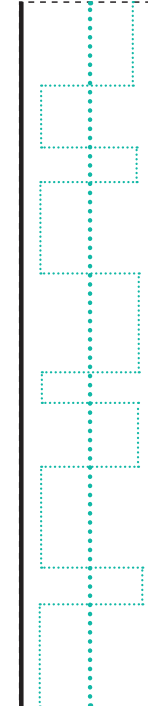
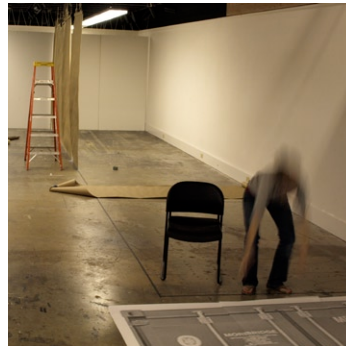


AND METHODOLOGY

FULL-SCALE MES PROTOTYPE

In the Fall semester of 2008 I created an independent study course with my primary advisor, Mary McLaughlin. The emphasis was on primary, first-hand research, studying the spatial conditions of a shipping container. I constructed a full scale prototype of a forty-foot long and eight-and-a-half-foot wide shipping container within a similar proportioned gallery space. This space would exhibit student work for the First Friday Art Walks in Richmond Virginia.

My intention was to gain insights into a visitor's experience in this space. I observed the full scale, spatial relationships and visitor's interaction with the information contained in the space. I observed how they circulated through the space, and the patterns developed. The kinds of information or works presented were also taken into consideration - their scale, density, level of detail, and placement.



LEFT: installation of October First Friday exhibition using graphic print of shipping container doors at full scale and sheets of butcher paper to delineate the forty-foot long wall

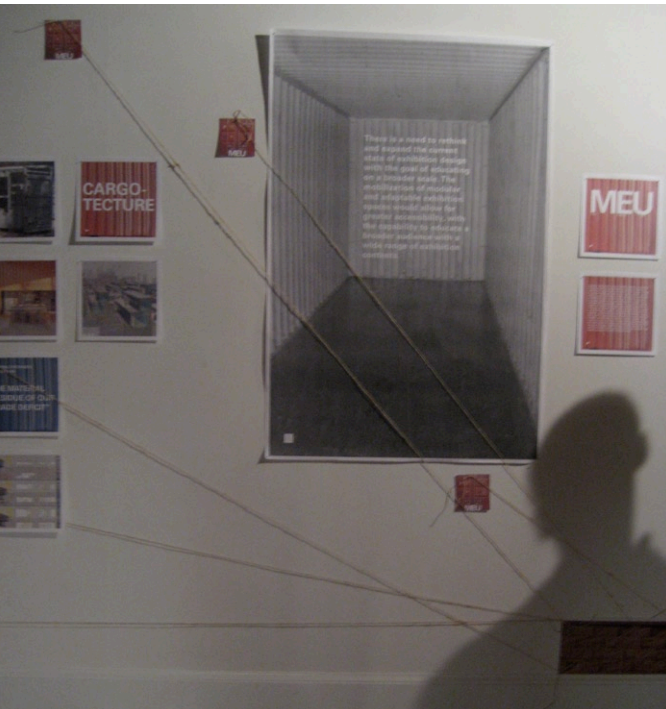
ABOVE: diagram of visitor circulation paths



ABOVE LEFT: installation explaining proposal for mobile exhibitions

ABOVE RIGHT: feedback on all aspects of the exhibition was encouraged, resulting in some good ideas

LEFT: standing at the midpoint of the container, looking down toward the back wall of the container



LEFT: density of information presented factored into how close the visitor got to the work and how long they stayed at each piece

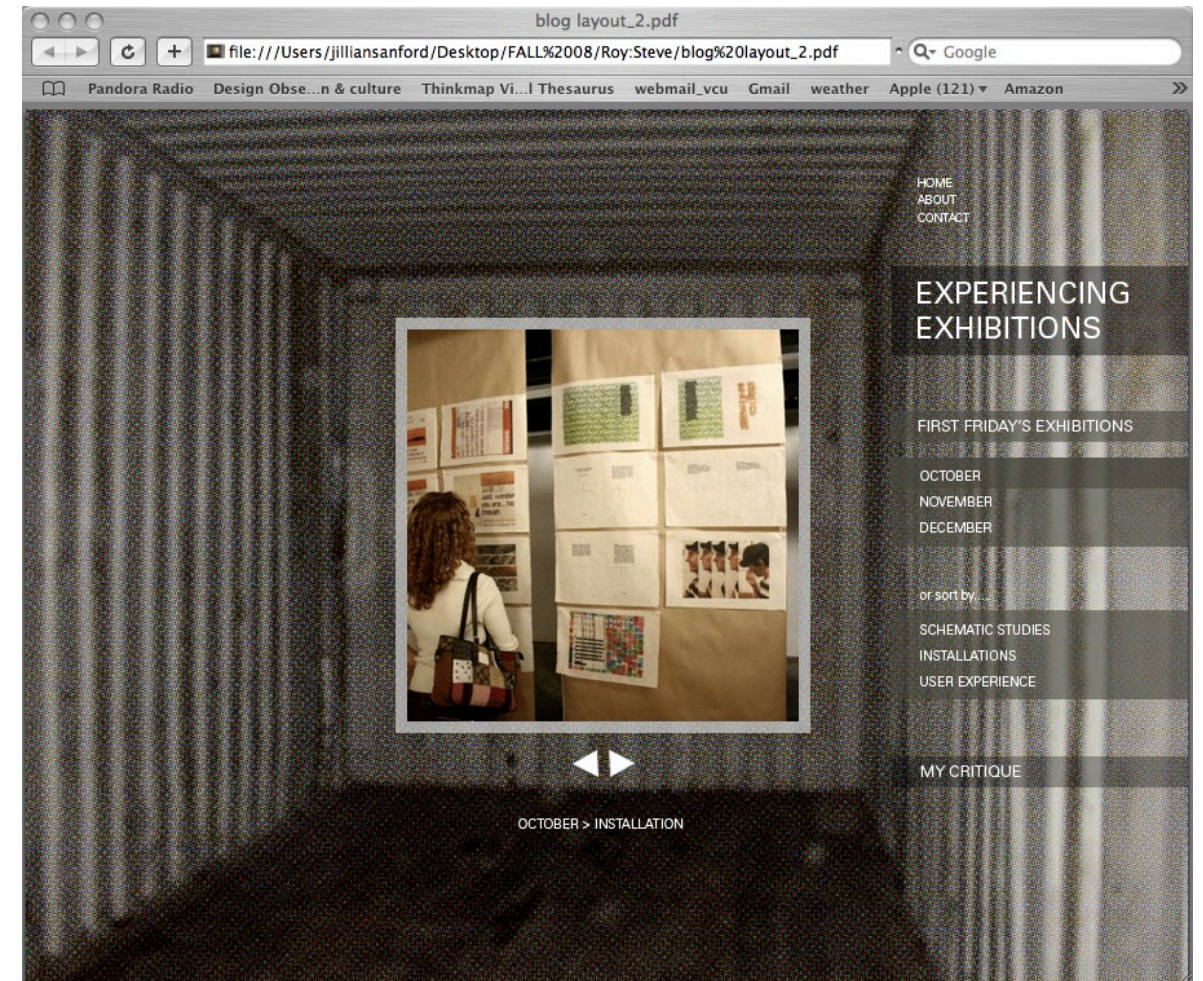
ABOVE: given the narrow width of the container, visitors were observed bouncing from wall to wall.



LEFT: VCU undergraduate design work was showcased in the container prototype; linear sequential pieces were displayed opposite of hand crafted pop-up books and objects
RIGHT: interactive flip panels allowed the visitor to actively engage with the information

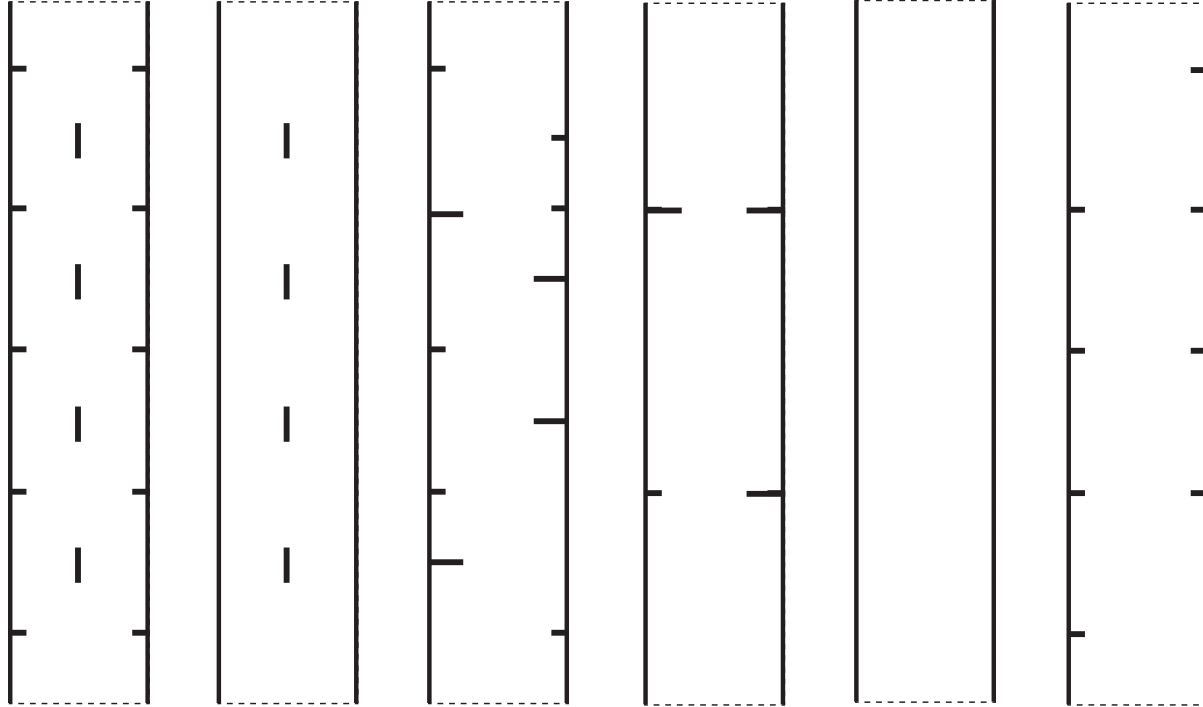


ABOVE: video documentation was gathered during the the exhibition openings to better observe visitor actions and patterns



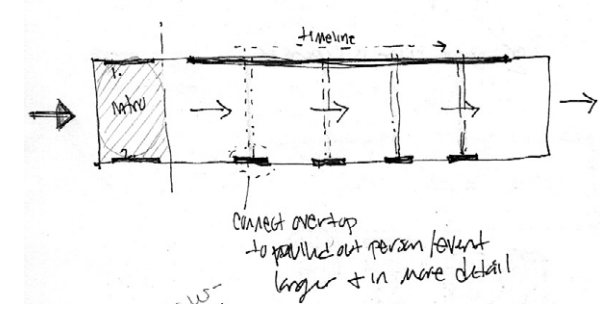
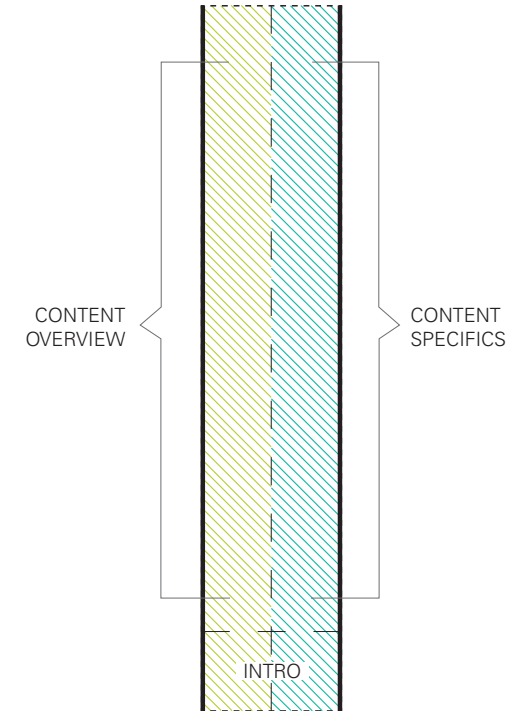
ABOVE: a blog was created to accompany the first friday exhibition experience, used for documentation purposes and a medium to encourage feedback from visitors

PLAN VARIATIONS



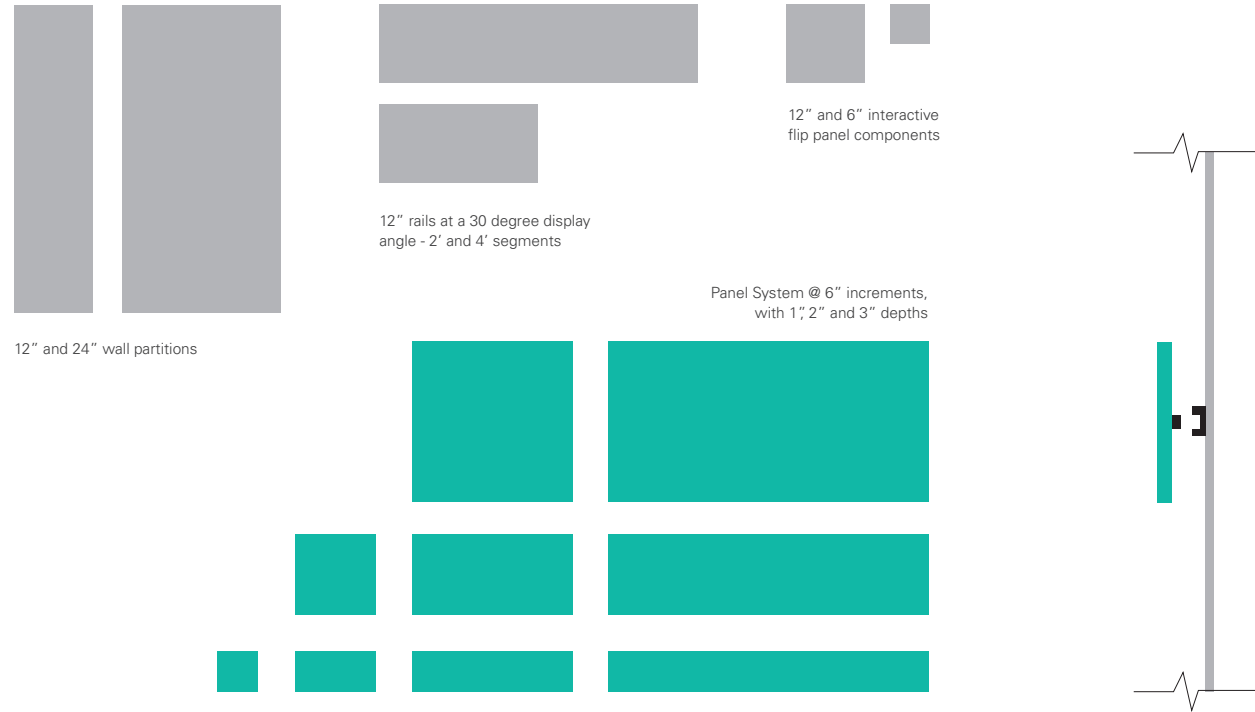
To physically divide the content or direct flow of visitor traffic, the one- or two-foot modular wall system can be utilized.

CONTENT DIVISION



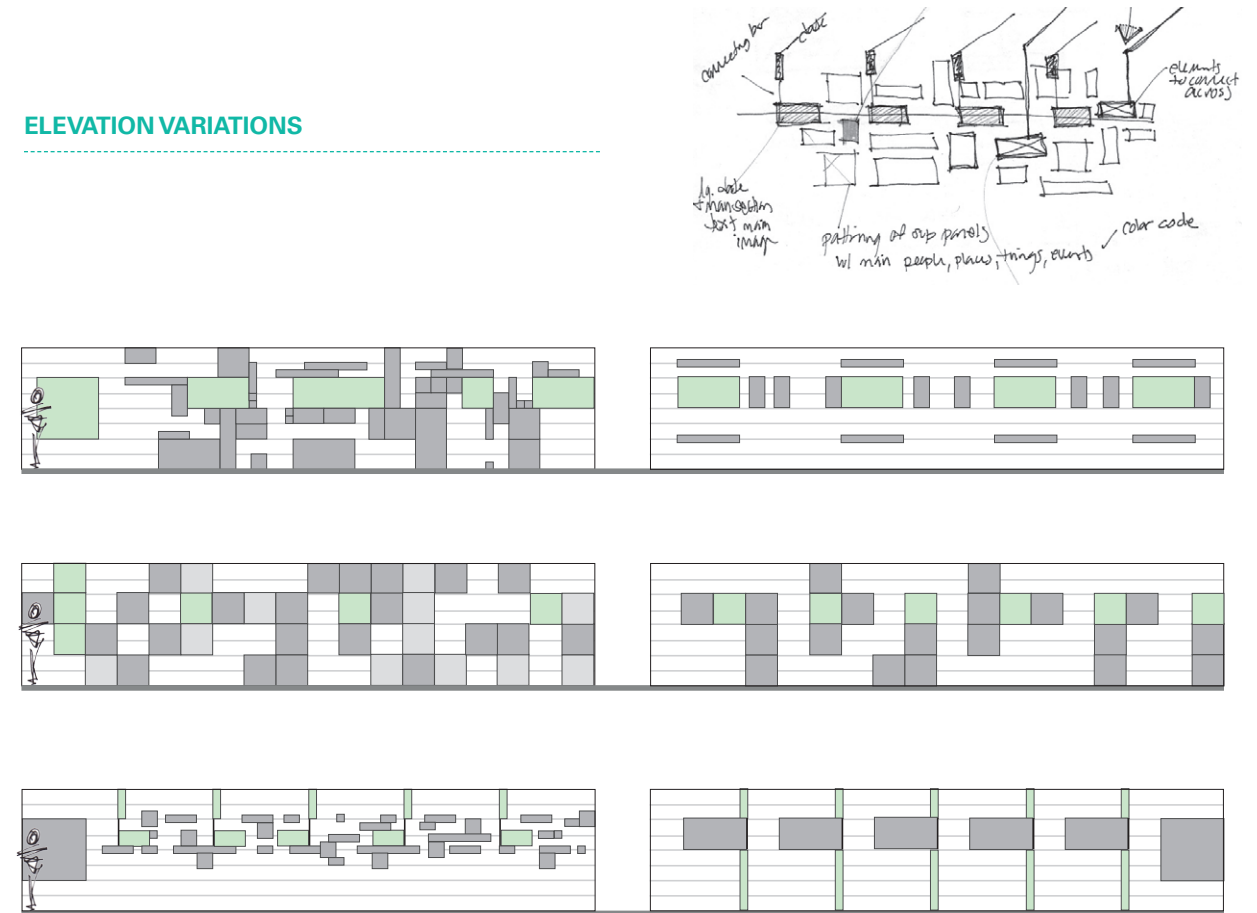
The content is divided into general overview information on the left and the detailed specifics on the right side, allowing the user to choose how they circulate through the container without disrupting the order and flow of content.

KIT OF PARTS

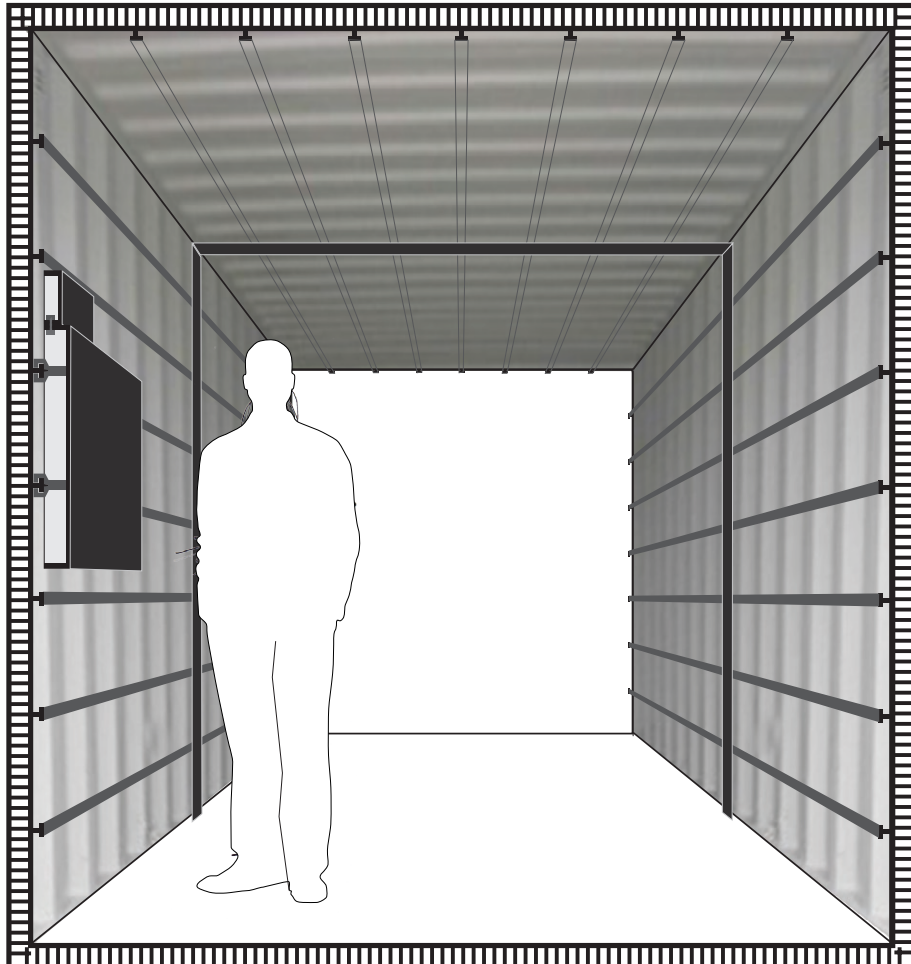


Modular wall partitions, graphic rails, interactive flip panels, and graphic panels make up the system's kit of parts. These components will magnetically fasten to the horizontal members along the interior container wall.

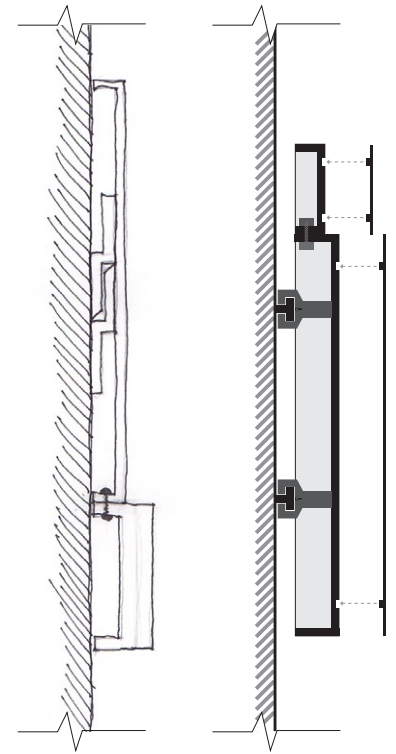
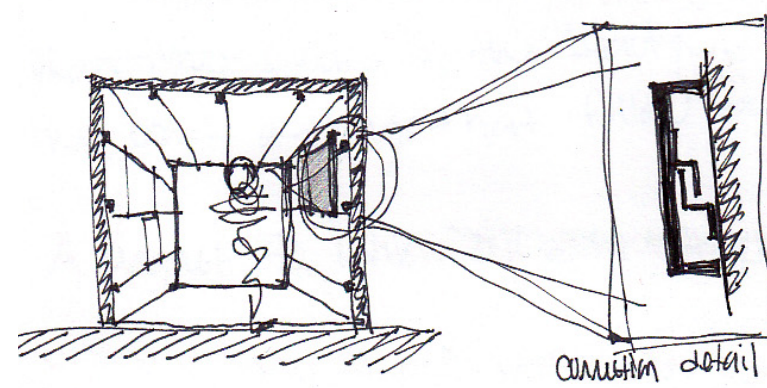
ELEVATION VARIATIONS



The graphic panels can be arranged in a variety of possible configurations to better reflect the content and help organize the information.



PANEL FASTENING SYSTEM



LEFT: section through container illustrating initial idea for panel-fastening system

ABOVE: ideation sketches for possible panel-fastening techniques

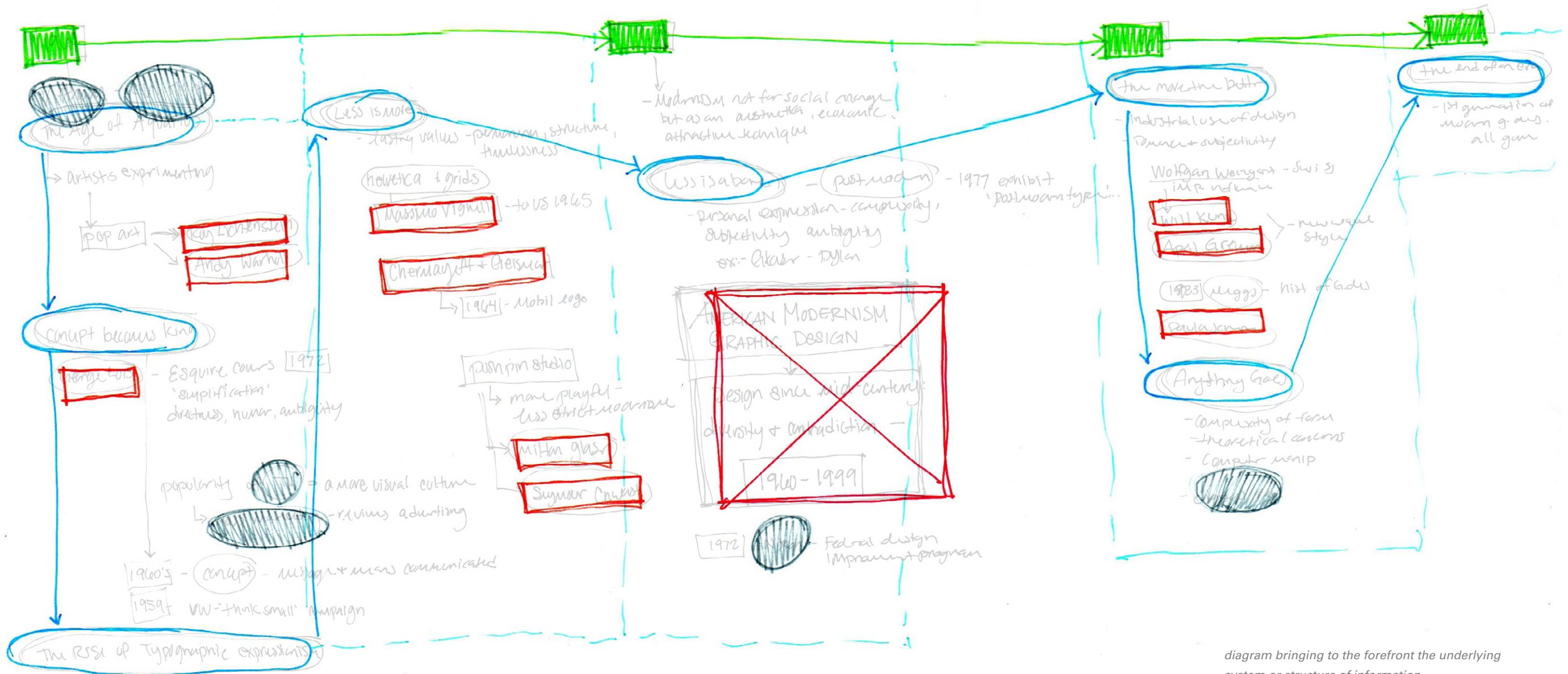
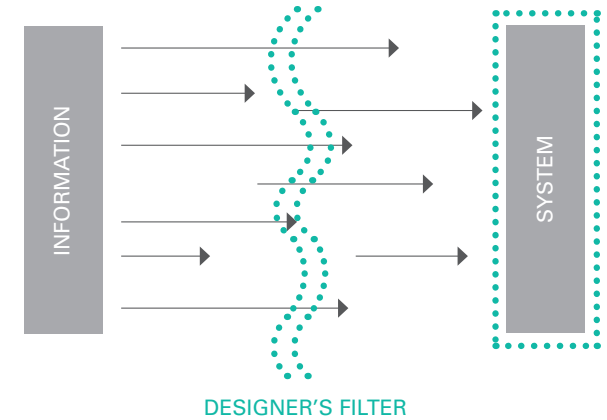
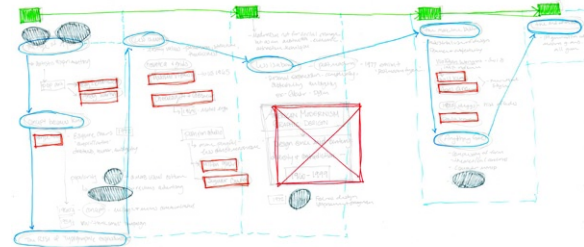
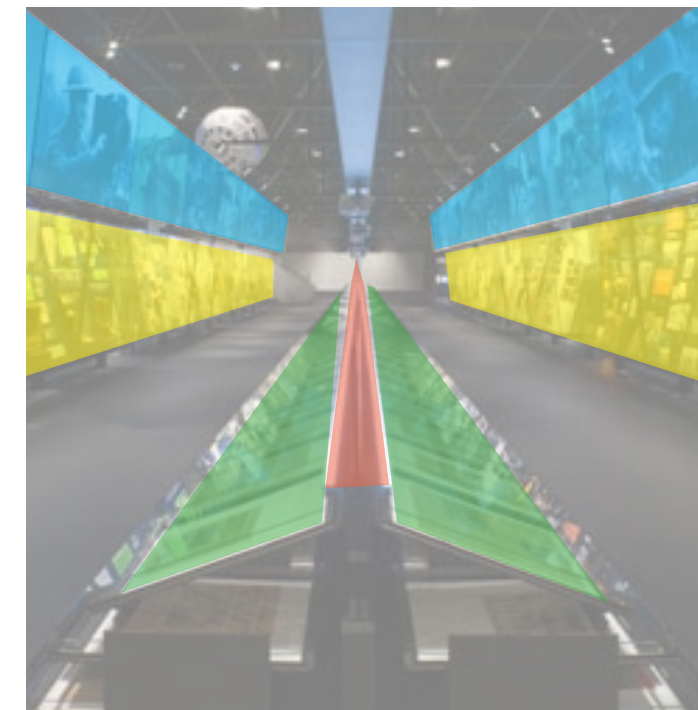
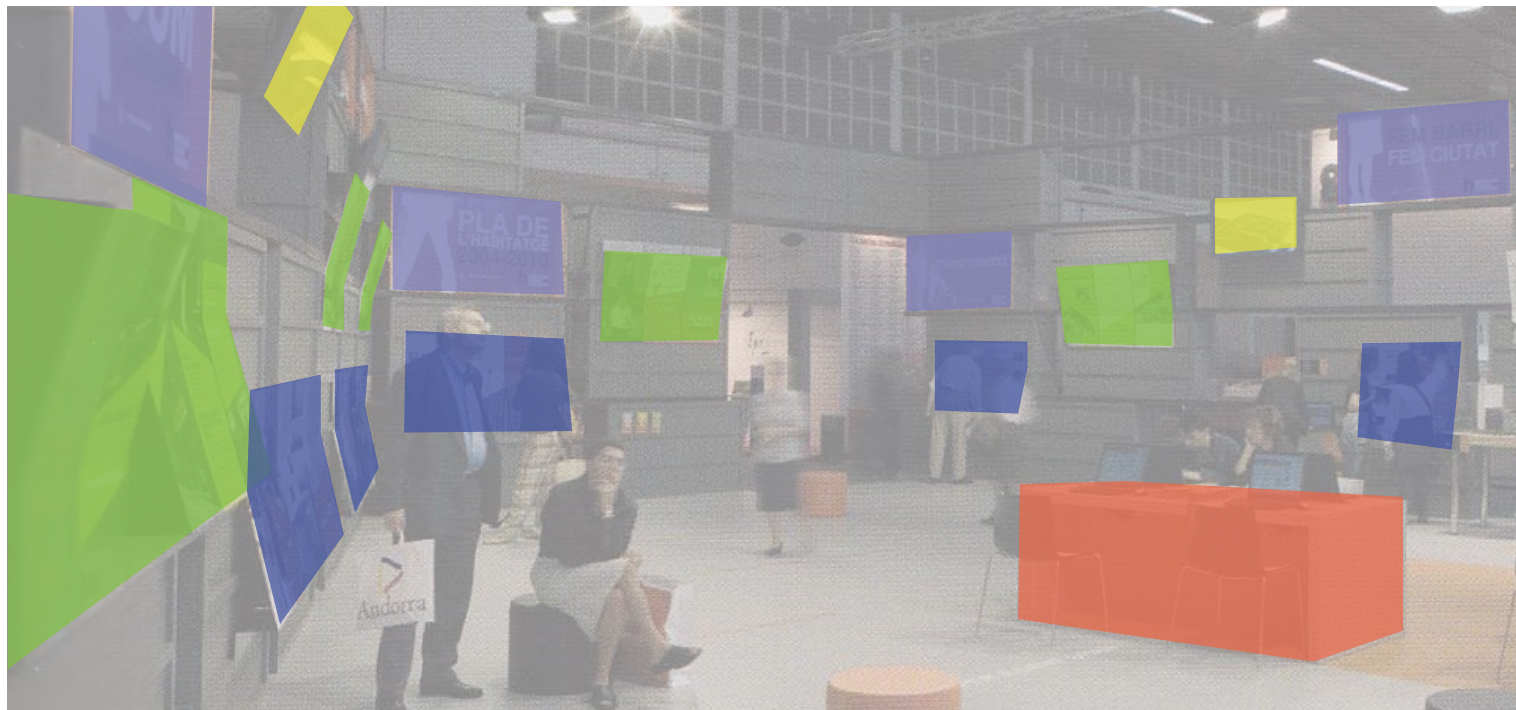
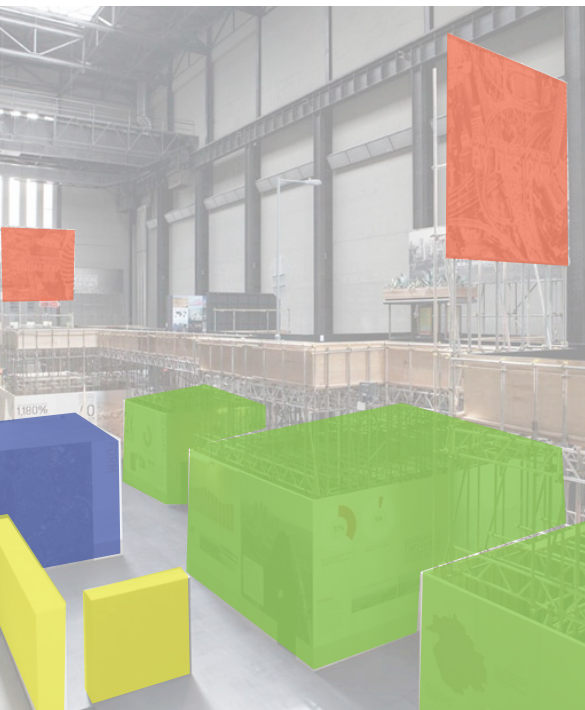


diagram bringing to the forefront the underlying system or structure of information

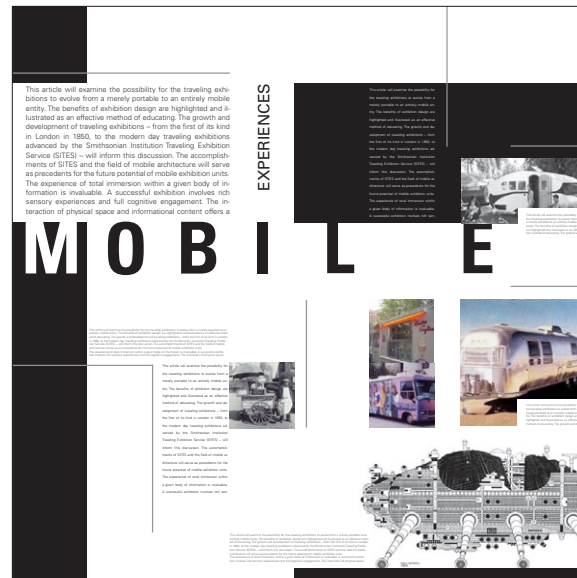
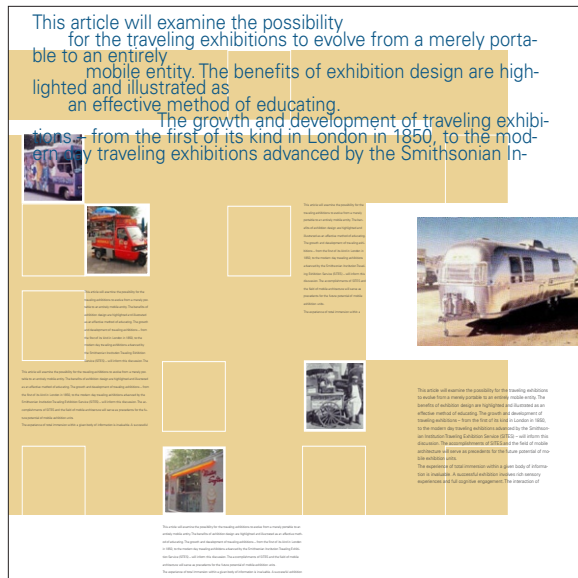


LEFT: organizational content diagram for possible history exhibit—American modernism in graphic design, instructional/informative exhibit—solar cooking, and science exhibit—environmental causes of autism

ABOVE: diagram illustrating need for designers' role in interpreting and organizing information into a better understood system

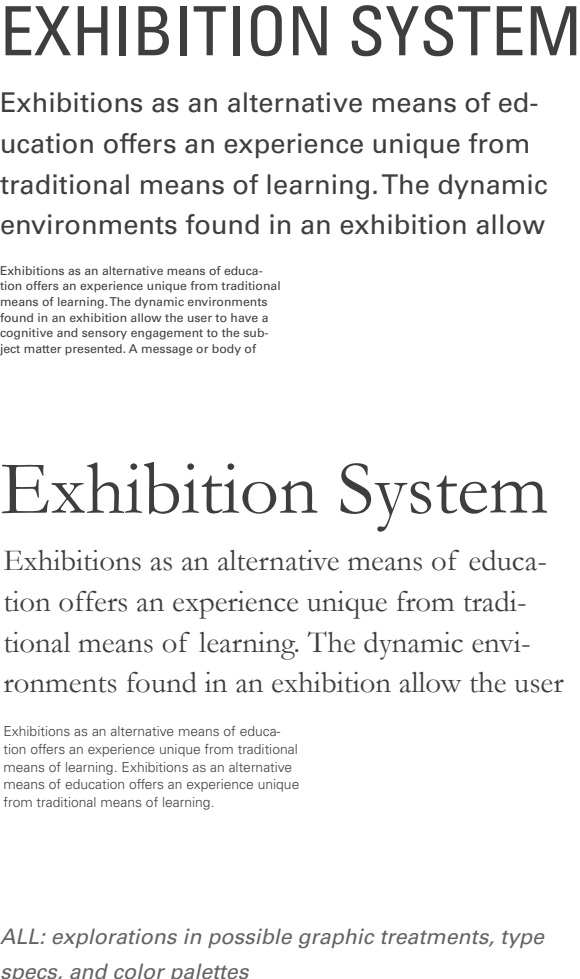
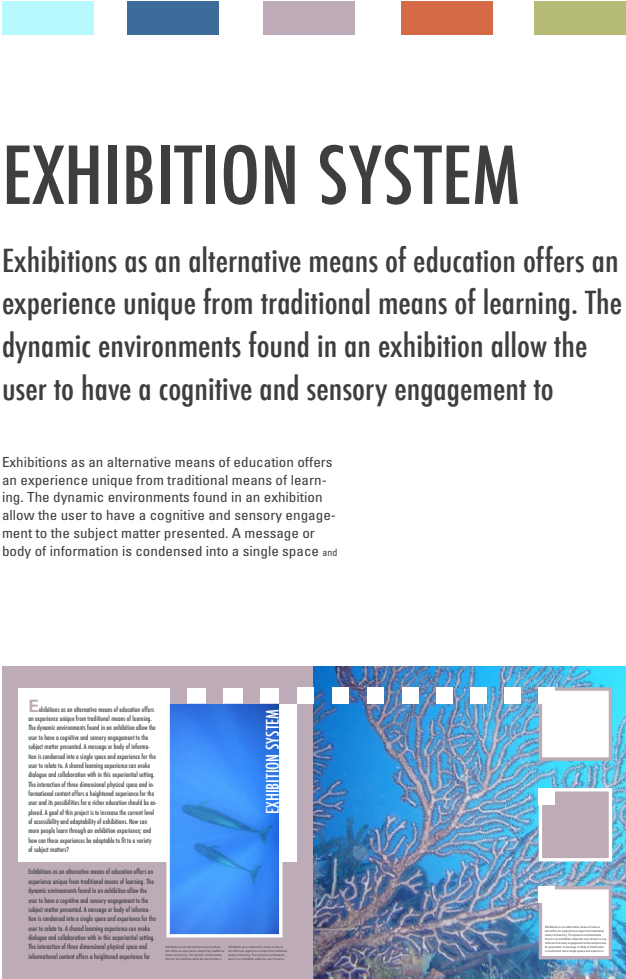
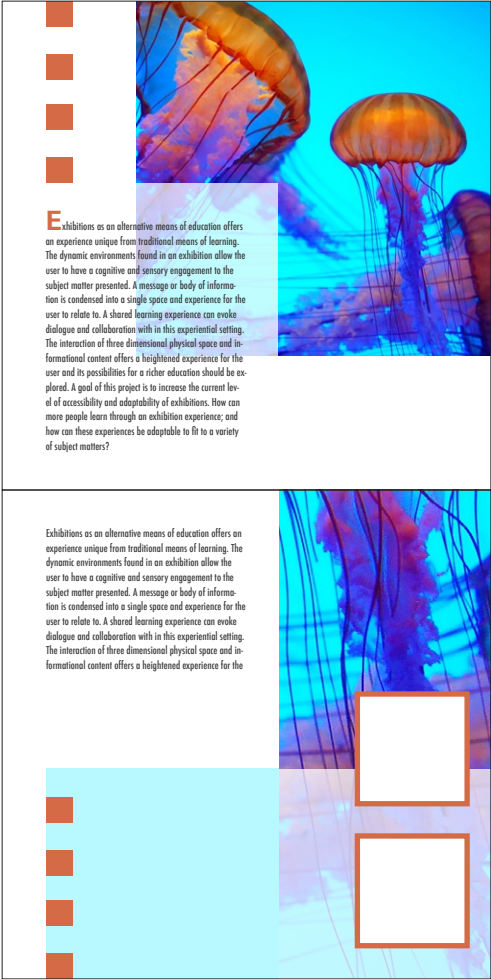


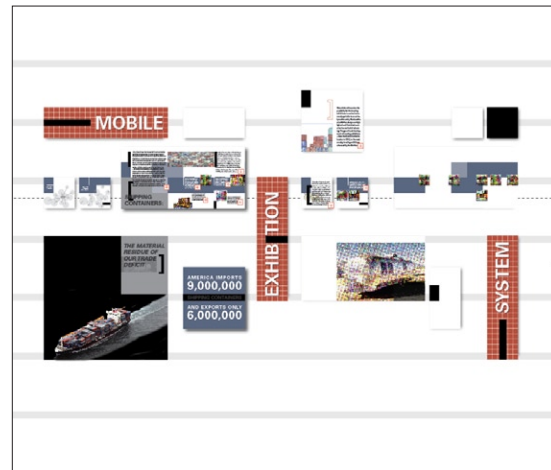
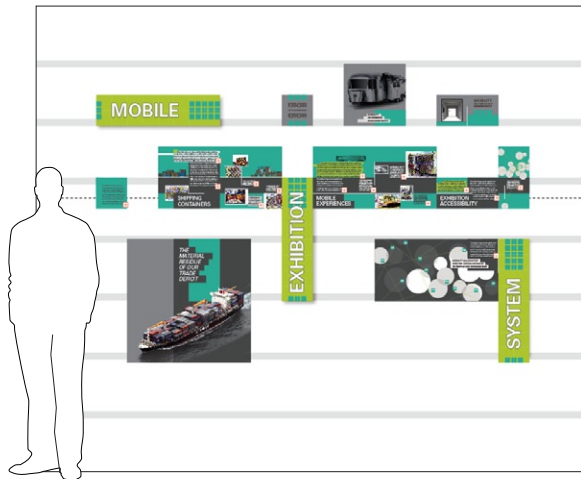
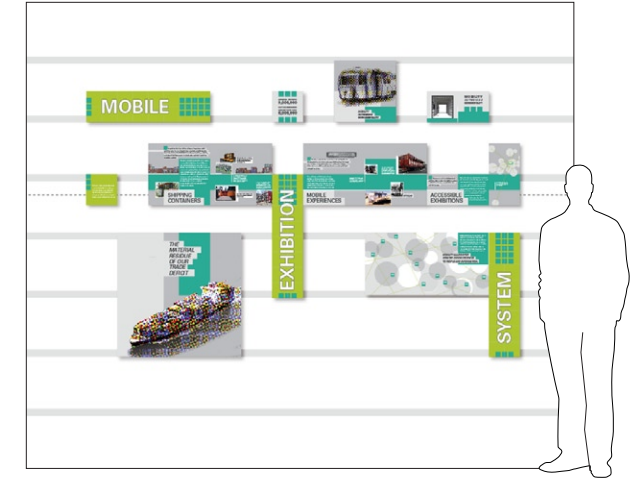
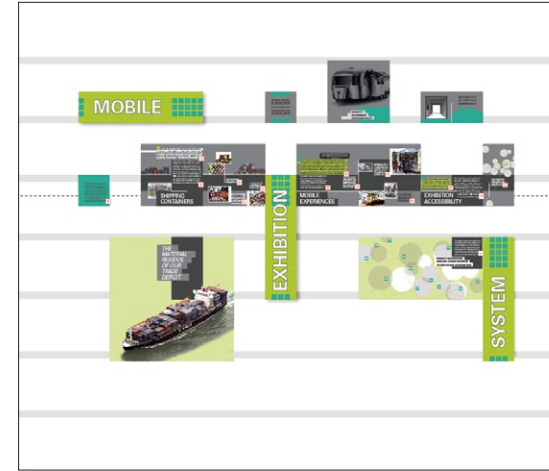
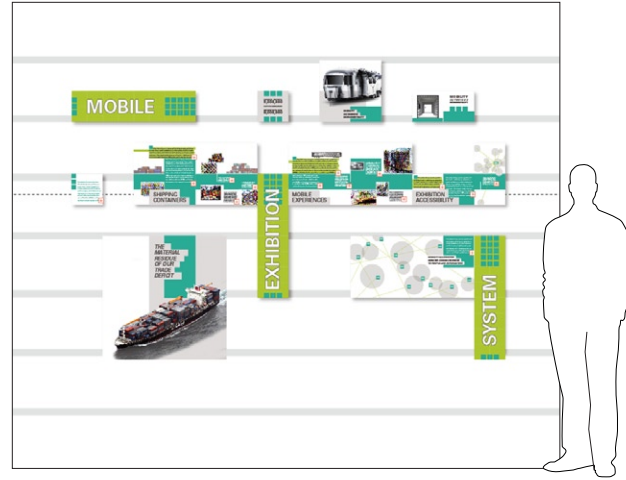
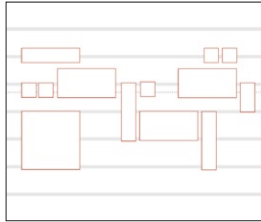
ALL: studies highlighting underlying systems in contemporary exhibition environments



ALL: explorations in possible graphic treatments for MFA exhibition panels



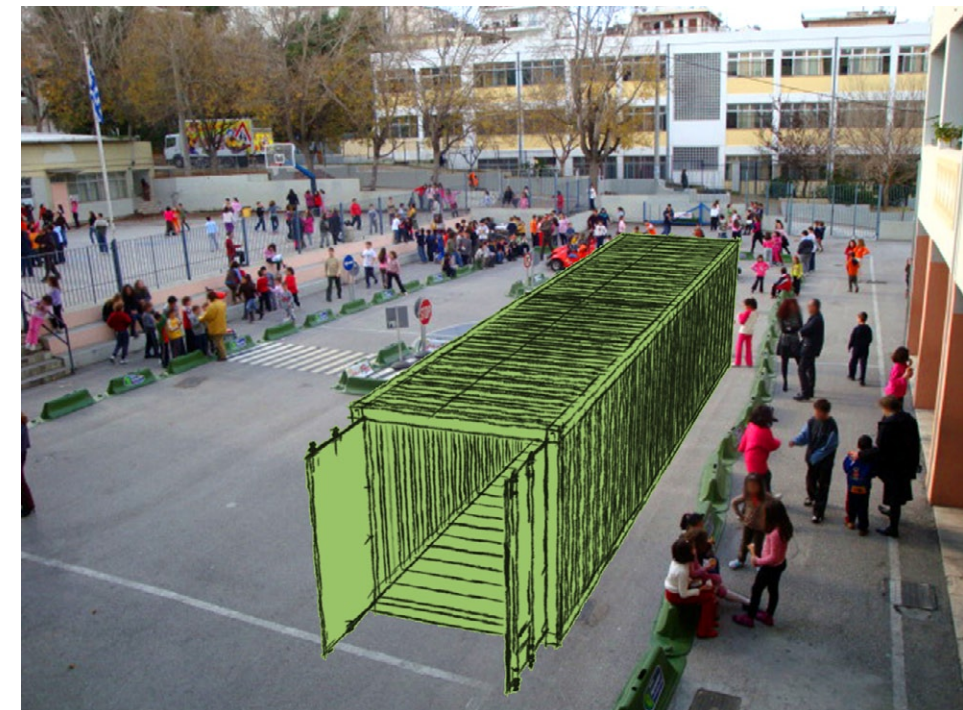




ALL: explorations of panel configurations, color application, and figure ground relationships of the panels to the container's interior



MOBILE EXHIBITION SYSTEM



ALL: renderings of possible locations for the mobile exhibitions with minimal impact on the site - an urban public square, big box retailer, developing country, inner city school yard



HEADING TEXT

In exploring formal possibilities of how to house these mobile exhibition units, I came across shipping containers as viable resources that fit the criteria of the Mobile Exhibition System (mobility, modularity, and adaptability). These containers are abundant and their possibilities should be explored.

This Mobile Medical Triage Unit is designed for Doctors Without Borders to be distributed to developing African nations. The mobile clinic is preconstructed and transportable by train, ship, and truck.

LEFT: panel composition and graphic treatment to illustrate one possibility of the Mobile Exhibitions System for the MFA show

RIGHT: color and typographic specifications for exhibit panels displayed at the MFA show

MOBILE

AMERICA IMPORTS
9,000,000
SHIPPING CONTAINERS
AND EXPORTS ONLY
6,000,000



In exploring formal possibilities of how to house these mobile exhibition units, I came across shipping containers as a viable resource that fit the criteria of the Mobile Exhibition System (mobility, modularity, and adaptability). These containers are abundant and their possibilities should be explored.

The size and modular nature of shipping containers are ideal Mobile Exhibition Units (MEUs) to be designed with various uses, and serve as a blank canvas for the design and adaptation of all elements needed to facilitate a flexible and modern gallery space within shipping containers and can be expected to incorporate the built-in content and resources. Shipping container architecture, limited construction, is transforming these containers as a medium of innovative design projects, reuniting their function and aesthetic.

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SHIPPING CONTAINERS

American society has become increasingly mobile, reflecting the nomadic life and culture in our genes. Mobility allows for greater convenience and productivity, a sense of modernness, freedom, and many mobile experiences that aim to more easily reach a broader population.

The traditional of libraries, health care facilities, and homes are just a few of these experiences. Through the development of these mobile experiences, they introduce an easily expanded, expanding services to communities that high infrastructure have been out of reach.

MOBILE EXPERIENCES

Some may say that a shortcoming of exhibition design today is its inability to connect with relative ease.

Especially when compared to the printed and electronic delivery of books, magazines and web sites, exhibition seem to have a long way to go in connecting the needs of their audience. Due to the three-dimensional nature, cost, and degree of permanence, exhibition institutions are generally seen as a more complicated and resistant means of delivering information than that of printed or electronic mediums.

ACCESSIBLE EXHIBITIONS

This wall serves as a full-scale mock-up of the Material Exhibition System. It is a key first segment of the fully functioning container, showcasing one of many possible variations of panel arrangements and graphic treatments.

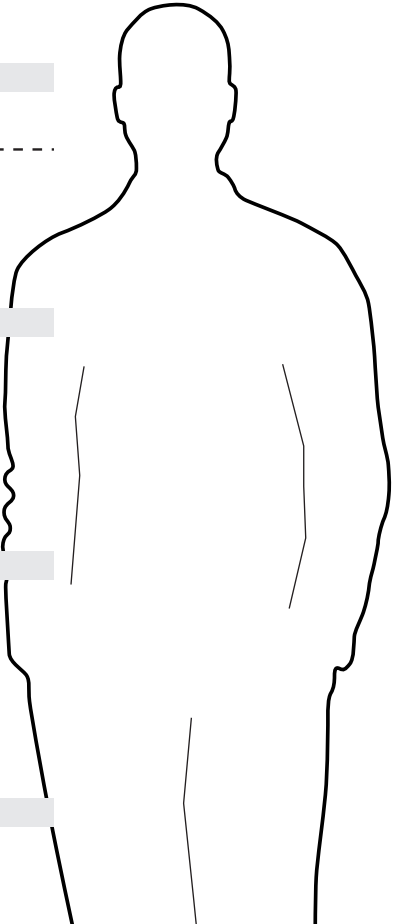
EXHIBITION



Mobile exhibitions will extend educational opportunities without regard to social, geographic, economic, or political boundaries. By offering "flexible" spaces that facilitate learning, teaching, meeting and connecting to communities, rather than remaining in the fixed space of the conventional museum.

MOBILITY ALLOWS FOR GREATER CONNECTEDNESS TO PEOPLE AND INFORMATION.

SYSTEM





American society has become increasingly mobile, reflecting the nomadic life and culture in our genes. Mobility allows for greater connectedness and, paradoxically, a sense of rootedness. Today, there exist many mobile experiences that aim to more easily reach a broader population.



Libraries are not always accessible to all people located in certain areas. Through the reduction in scale and mobilization of a library, the bookmobile is able to better disseminate the content of the library.



As a means of spreading the word about the Liverpool Biennial, a shipping container was transported around the city. Because of its mobility, this announcement was able to reach a larger population and connect them to information on the biennial event.



The mobilization of libraries, health care facilities, and homes are just a few of these experiences. Through the deployment of these mobile experiences, their resources are vastly expanded, extending services to populations that might otherwise have been out of reach.



The hot dog cart is one of the earliest food vendors that brings food to people.

Some may say that a shortcoming of exhibition design today is its inability to spread and distribute its message and information with relative ease.

Especially when compared to the printed and electronic ephemera of books, magazines and web sites, exhibitions seem to have a long way to go in overcoming the limits of their accessibility. Due to its three-dimensional nature, scale, and degree of permanence, exhibition installations are generally seen as a more complicated and involved means of spreading information than that of printed or electronic mediums.

Currently, exhibitions remain in a fixed space where people have to travel to their specific location to experience them.

MOBILE EXPERIENCES

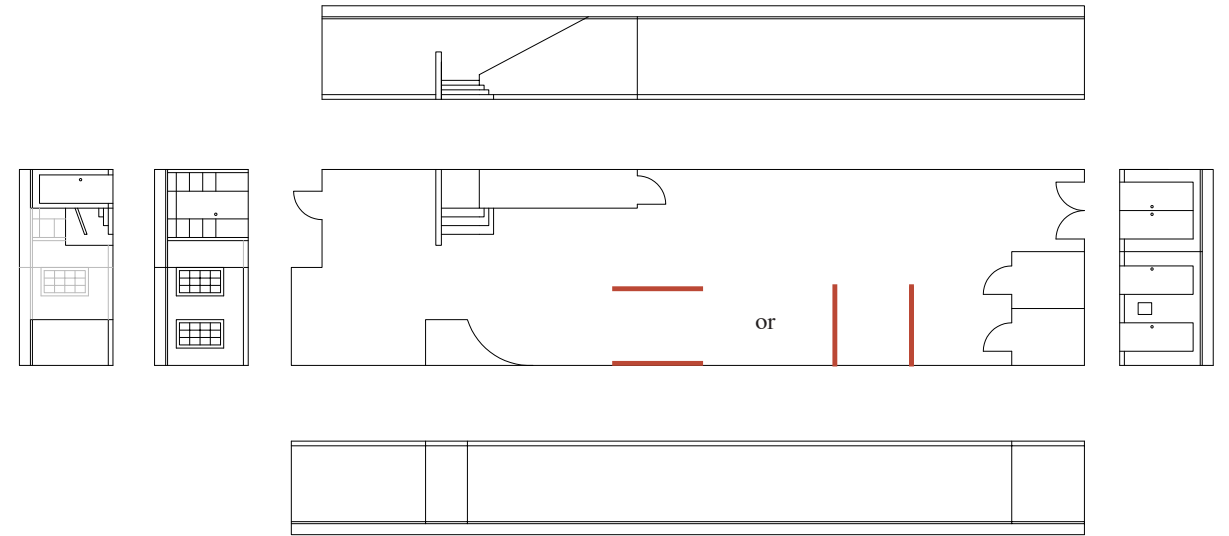
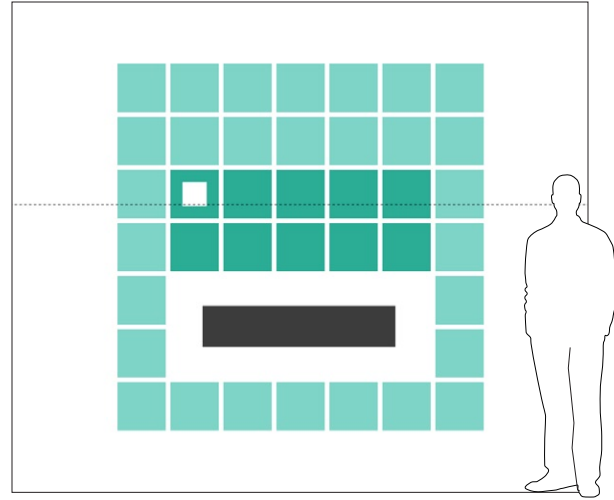
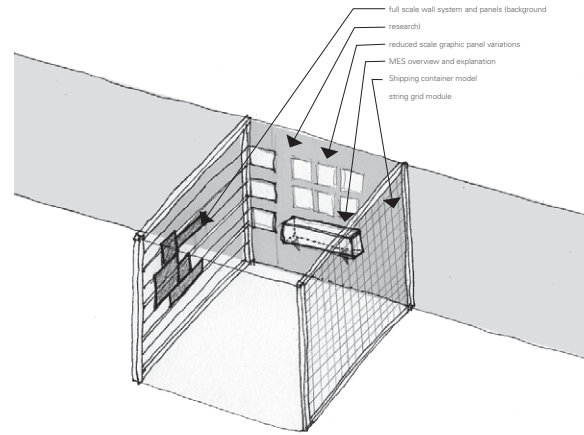
ACCESSIBLE EXHIBITIONS



ABOVE: detail of graphic connection between three panels in the Mobile Exhibition System



MAY 1, 2009 EXHIBITION



LEFT: original ideation for the MFA show installation and process wall plan

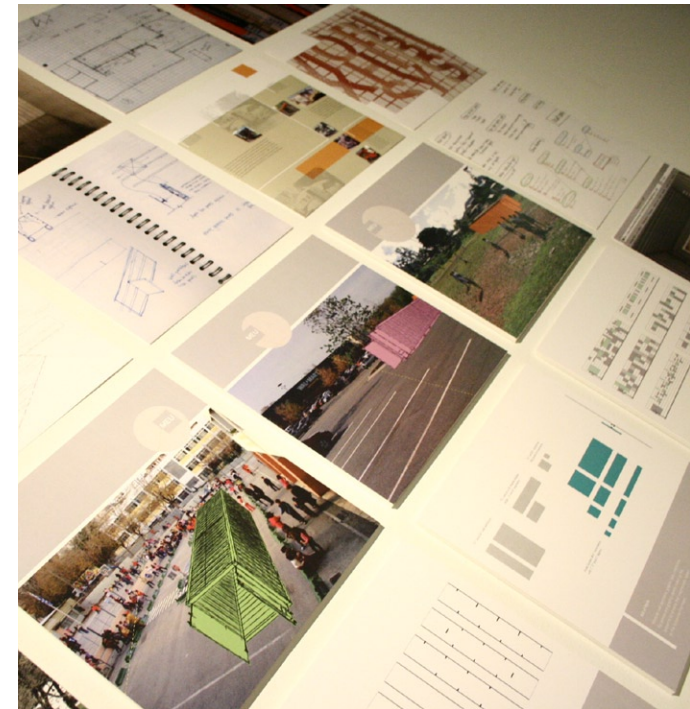
ABOVE: drawing of the gallery space aided in deciding the orientation of the container segment prototype and how it would be experienced by the visitor

BEFORE



AFTER







LEFT: ten foot section of panel system at full scale illustrating one possible configuration and graphic treatment

RIGHT: Mobile Exhibition System explanation, scaled model and process wall



In the development of this project I sought to find an appropriate synthesis of my interests and skills in architecture and graphic design. At the culmination of my studies, I ask myself what other possibilities could arise from this union of the two fields?

The field of graphic design is growing. Multiple design fields are beginning to see the potential in working across disciplines and collaborating with one another. There are now design studios that do not just limit their range of work to print design, web design, exhibition design, or environmental design. They instead encourage cross disciplinary collaboration. This collaborative environment often times results in unique and innovative outcomes that might not have otherwise been realized in a single design track. I want to continue my efforts in exploring multiple design mediums and what their union and synthesis could inspire and communicate.





[1] Samara, Timothy. *Making and Breaking the Grid*. Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers, Inc. 2002.

Samara outlines the power of the grid as a device in ordering information, and when it is appropriate and effective push to the boundaries of the grid.

[2] Carter, Rob. DeMao, John. Wheeler, Sandy. *Working with Type, 5 Exhibitions*. new york, new york: watson-guptill publications, 2000.

Working with Type, 5 Exhibitions focus on the role of typography in exhibition design. The points are illustrated through a close look at case studies of specific exhibitions.

[3] Wurman, Richard Saul. *Information Architecture*. New York: Graphis inc., 1997.

The goal of an information architect is to make the complex clear. This book illustrated the necessity and the tools in the design of understanding.

[4] Lindauer, Margaret. "The Critical Museum Visitor." In *New Museum Theory and Practice*, by Janet Marstine, 203-225. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Margaret Lindauer, a Virginia Commonwealth University professor in Museum Studies, offers insight in how one should critically and intelligently visit a museum in order to gain a better perception into the experience.

[5] Scoates, Christopher. *LOT-EK: Mobil Dwelling Unit*. New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2003.

LOT-EK is a design firm that focus on blurring the boundary between art, architecture, entertainment and information. They seek to make architecture with existing objects, systems and technologies in innovative and unexpected ways. Conventional space and function configurations are placed into question in an attempt to re-invent domestic/work/play spaces. The Mobile Dwelling Unit (MDU) is a creation of LOT-EK that manipulates the form of a shipping container, carving out spatial zones for specific functions suitable for living.

[6] Siegal, Jennifer. Mobile: *The Art of Portable Architecture*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.

Office of Mobile Design (OMD), founded by Jennifer Siegal is a Los Angeles based design firm specializing in green Prefab architecture. OMD is dedicated to the design and construction of responsible, sustainable, beautiful structures including urban housing developments, private residences, schools and classrooms. OMD has also employed the reuse of shipping containers into many projects, ranging from high density communities to a mobile Shakespeare theater. OMD believes in the power of mobility - resulting in greater connectivity.

[7] Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service . 2008. <http://www.sites.si.edu/>.

SITES is a contemporary look at how traveling exhibitions are run and operated today.

[8] Library of Congress. The Work of Charles and Ray Eames. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/eames/>.

The Eameses had a collaborative and holistic approach to design that transcended any specific design field. From architecture, product design, exhibition design, to film they tackled a variety of projects always pushing the envelope of possibilities. The Eameses embraced the era's visionary concept of modern design as an agent of social change. Their evolution from furniture designers to cultural ambassadors demonstrated their boundless talents and the overlap of their interests with those of their country, realizing their power and impact they can have in educating the public.

[9] Virginia, University of. Elizabeth River Learning Barge. <http://www.arch.virginia.edu/learningbarge/>.

A team of University of Virginia architecture students and faculty have designed a floating environmental education field station to engage kids in hands-on exploration and learning about the Elizabeth River. Most current environmental education is web based or communicated through classroom teaching. This educational experience mobilizes itself to better connect with the natural setting of its content and the community, the way in which I hope to see the mobile exhibition unit do so. It also reuses and reappropriates a barge to better relate to its content.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have in some way supported, and contributed to my development over the past few years. I owe much thanks my thesis committee, Mary McLaughlin, John DeMao, and Camden Whitehead for their mentorship, guidance, and help throughout this journey.

I am thankful to the wonderful graduate design faculty that has inspired me creatively and intellectually. Thank you to my fellow graduate students, whose unique blend inspired and motivated me throughout our journey together.

To my husband, Will, I am eternally grateful for your support and understanding over the past few years. Mom, Dad, Cole and DeeDee, your presence and strength will continue to inspire and drive me forward. Thank you all.



